THE DELINQUENCY of JOHN MEREDITH

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BY

PHIL. EDWARDS

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FOREWORD.

Some years ago the writer became acquainted with a man who told the story of his life. It was a strange story indeed. Since then, and at different times, the story has in part, been told from pulpit and platform; and also by the fireside, yes, and to men sitting upon boxes and barrels in country stores. The story of the man who cursed most men and all women, and who came later to bless them, was always listened to with pleasure and profit; and many there are who are asking for the story in book form. They want to read for themselves of the "Social Delinquent" called John Meredith, who became a strong man and a member of society. This John Meredith is not presented as a perfect man. He was bad tempered, morbid and egotistic to a painful degree both to himself and others. But let him tell his own story by the use of another's pen; hoping not only to interest them, but also to help some other poor fellow.

Emerson, Manitoba, October, 1910.

THE DELINQUENCY OF JOHN MEREDITH

The Delinquency of John Meredith

CHAPTER I.

I am sixty years of age and as healthy and happy as any man over whose head sixty snows have passed.

I think I can truly say that I love God and my fellow-men. By this I do not mean to say that I am a Saint, but rather to recall the fact, that there was a time when I loved neither God nor man. That was thirty years ago.

At thirty years of age I contemplated marriage. The lady was beautiful and quite accomplished. More than that I cannot say. I loved her; she loved another. The man she loved was my most intimate friend. I lost; he won her. Which gained most by the transaction I cannot tell. Marriage, they say, is a lottery. Well, I drew a blank, and like many another poor fellow lost all pleasure in life. Sitting here gazing into the fire, listening to music and laughter, I feel inclined to laugh at my past folly. But by the God who made me it was no laughing matter

then. In my madness I cursed all men and things,—besides women. As for women, I did not consider them worth a common damn.

I sold out my business and interest for ten thousand dollars. Calculating that I could live at ease for a number of years, I settled down in absolute retirement. Strange to say, I never once thought of dissipation.

I sold my business because I wanted to be as independent as possible. Another reason, I concluded, that when a man has lost faith in his fellow-men, he should cease to do business with them. Surely, when one has gone the length of cursing all and that without reserve, he should quit. So I thought then, and I think so yet.

Friends asked for an explanation. When given it did not explain. Some shook their heads, others smiled. The fact of the matter was, that what they called a "jilt" was quite a jolt for me. Had I known then, what I know now, I might have saved myself and others a good deal of questioning and trouble. The best cure for an old love they say, is a new one. I did not know that, and as a consequence, tasted bitterness and became embittered.

Thirty years ago, and for the reasons given, I became a social delinquent. For ten whole

years I held as little intercourse with my fellowmen as possible. And as for women, well, not one was ever invited to darken the door of my house or hut. The lady who came, and who saw and conquered, came of her own free will, and at her own invitation. She conquered because she came compelled by a woman's heart and daring. She is living yet and as well and happy as I am. It is to her love and tact that I owe so much. Had she loved less, or dared less, I should have lived many years longer a social delinquent; or perhaps a social outcast. For be it known to all such, that the man who withdraws himself from the society of his fellowmen, becomes at length an outcast,—cast out by them. Forget others, and they will soon forget you.

CHAPTER II.

I began my new and strange existence by breaking every friendship. I was never considered a very sociable man, never very friendly, but I had a few good friends, and well worth the keeping. Without loss of time I gave them to understand that all kindness and attention had become very distasteful to me. Upon making the discovery, and in accordance with my wishes, they left me alone.

For the first three months of my retirement I was never seen upon the streets of our town. Indeed, I nearly ruined my health by staying in doors. Only one man called, and he was the last man I either expected or wished to see. Fifteen minutes after his arrival, I lost my temper, and with frigid politeness requested him to leave. He did so and never returned again. Those who tried to reach me by letter, met with no better success. Most of the letters I received, remained unopened, and consequently unanswered.

Springtime came with irresistible charm. Nature is mistress everywhere. The same en-

chanter that awakened the squirrel and sent him to chatter upon my garden fence, awakened in me a desire for life again. Then the birds and bees came with their message, and I yielded so far as to take a morning's walk before the most of people were out of their beds. Once I had tasted the morning's air laden with freshness and perfume I was a better man. My health at least improved. Not that I improved morally or socially, far from it. Then it was that I swore a life-long friendship with Nature. Nature in all forms and in all her moods, save man. No Eastern devotee worshipped at Sacred Shrine more faithfully than I worshipped Nature. Usually I awoke early, bathed my body as an act of devotion and immediately went out. Cloud or sunshine, storm or calm, I went into the woods. Should I happen to meet anyone, I merely nodded my head and passed on. I have never been intoxicated, yet I confess to having at times lost all accountability when rambling through the woods. Many a time have I been seized with a strange delight, wild as madness. Once I thought myself out of sight and hearing, the seizure began. How I laughed, shouted, and leaped over mounds and fallen trees. I who shunned the face of man chatted with birds and

squirrels by the hour. I who had isolated myself from friend and foe would prattle a kind of baby-talk to a squirrel or a chipmunk on a log or a fence. Not occasionally, but season after season did this delightful mania seize me and hold me hour after hour in its spell. Of the many writers whose books have charmed me, the writings of Henry David Thoreau take first rank. His "Walden" is seldom out of reach, and never out of mind. If I were a specialist, having to treat patients for nervous disorders, I would certainly swear by Thoreau. And if my patients suffered from despondency, I would pack them off to the woods at once. Indoors is as fatal as the guillotine. Drugs are only degrees in the direction of the graveyard. Surely our eminent and humane medical men will move in the right direction some of these days. The first step taken, will be to buy or reserve large tracts of woods or bush, into which the discouraged, disappointed and despairing may be let loose amongst jack rabbits, squirrels, birds and flowers from morning till evening. And I have an idea that the treatment might be continued nearly all the year round. Winter has its charm and balm as well as Summer. Thoreau loved nature in all her moods.

Storm and calm were alike to him. The wind fury in the tree-tops, or the breeze at sunset might often be an awakening to sanity. Of course I would be laughed at by experts, laughed out of court. But I am one who has proved that Nature can successfully handle a bad case. My case was as bad as could be and she pulled me through. What others did for me later was only possible because she treated body and mind so successfully. After a lapse of twenty-five years, I am more convinced than ever, that I was in a desperate condition. The day good old parson Brownell called, I refused to open the door. No doubt he heard some rich profanity. That night I played Hamlet, Othello and a few local tragedies. The night's work certainly reached the limit of mental responsibility. Three months from that date, I was quite a different man. I who wanted to die vowed to live. To live joyfully if not thankfully. And well do I remember, when out in the woods, shouting to the sky above the tree-tops, that I would live a hundred years.

CHAPTER III.

Anti-sociability is not considered a punishable offence in our country. It should be dealt with at once if punishment would only lessen the number of cases. Good and great men are often great sinners against society. Thomas Carlyle was a great and good man but sad grouch, and quite anti-sociable. Great writers and even thinkers, are often very small men. "Mostly fools" was an unkind thing to say of his own countrymen. Carlyle must have written that after a long stay in London. Surely he never could have written such a thing in sight of the "Bonny Heather."

One of the strange things connected with my case and condition was my hatred for all kinds of religion. Now I did not profess to be religious, neither was I at all profane naturally. When I ever thought of myself religiously, and occasionally I did, it was with some satisfaction. I had passed through several periods of religious revival with credit. By that I mean that whilst making no profession of religion personally, I wished others to do so. But from

the beginning of my retirement, religion and religious people aroused all the hatred of my nature. This was all the more surprising, because of the fact, that of all the church-going folk in our town, none had ever harmed nor injured me in the least. Throughout the long period I never entered the door of a church. Even when I passed by during the vocal part of the service, I became agitated almost to suffocation. During my idleness I read much, and mostly upon religious subjects. I who had a quarrel with God, and delighted in cursing all men, read a score of volumes upon the subjects of election, predestination, and the atonement. Sometimes I became a church Bishop arguing against Methodists and Baptists. At other times the Presbyterians needed a champion, and I entered the list for days together. At last I became a Cardinal of the Roman church, plotting and scheming for the return to temporal power. But the climax was reached, when after a day and a night's reading of Massillon's sermons, I half resolved to become a social being again that I might read those matchless sermons to others.

On the whole, modern Christianity suffered much by my rough handling. This I account

for by the fact that I owned a set of "Grote's History of Greece." Many a day and many a night did I spend reading the volumes of the set. Later I bought a set of "Gibbon" and certainly damaged Christianity and civilization by comparison with paganism. Indeed I became a pagan. Julian was but a little more anxious for the restoration of the gods than I was. Think of it, I who hated women ten times more than men, fell in love with Hypatia. I first became acquainted with that estimable lady through the writings of Charles Kingsley. And the only thing I did worth calling an effort in those days, was ransack all literature for some reference to Hypatia and her times.

Whilst I mixed, or mingled so little with men, I occasionally heard of what was going on, and of what was being said and done. One of the visiting preachers who conducted revival services in one of the churches, preached a good deal upon the subject of the Second Coming of Christ. Not knowing why, I became interested too, and managed to get hold of books and tracts upon the subject. "Ages" and "dispensations," "raptures," and "trumpets" soon held my imagination completely. The reading of such books resulted in a much better ac-

quaintance with the Bible. For two years, neither Grote nor Gibbon received much attention. So scriptural became my imagination, that I heard strange sounds, and saw strange sights. Sometimes as I looked up at the sky, I saw beautiful cities, and celestial beings upon the battlements. The "New Jerusalem" coming down from God out of heaven. How to account for such sights and feelings I do not know. But in those days they were very real and very beautiful.

CHAPTER IV.

All connected with the strange life and experience, has long since passed. Sometimes I think of it with a shudder, and a feeling of shame. At other times with some satisfaction because of the knowledge gained. It is a source of great pleasure to know that no one was hurt by my state and conduct but myself. In a little low cottage on a back street I lived almost forgotten for five years. For a period of ten years I never travelled a distance of one hundred miles from home. My only excursions were to the woods and back again. There I spent the last five years in a lodge or hut built with my own hands, and a little assistance from Dick Middleton. After the first winter, I was always healthy and generally happy, only when annoyed and giving way to bad temper. Rarely did I become despondent, and that only after some exultation or annoyance. To the last I was unsocial to all save a few, although my real hatred of men ceased. In a mean and contemptible way I kept up the quarrel with women, calling them names and quoting writers

and sayings which belittled the fair sex. My favorite quotations were:—"O woman thou art the gate of hell" or "Women are all rakes at heart." However, there came at last a woman who changed the state of things, and that in short order.

CHAPTER V.

No doubt the reader would like to know how I lived during my delinquency, or rather, who did my cooking and washing. To people whose lives are clean and orderly, it is inconceivable that a person could exist without some assistance from others.

When I settled my business affairs, and later purchased a cottage, I made all possible provision for exile. All my plans were well laid and that after much thought and deliberation. My real wants were few. However my difficulties were many, and had I not become so hardened and persistent in my course, would have been compelled to become more sociable.

My worst and greatest difficulties were met during the first winter. During that season I was never once seen upon the streets of our town. I laid my plans well, consequently my cellar and pantry were well supplied. Cooking and washing, besides eating, sleeping and reading were my only occupations. I have no doubt but that my housekeeping was on the whole, very discreditable. Only a person half crazed

as I was, would have endured such a state of things for a single moment. One reason why I refused to open the door to the few callers who came, was because of the untidy, if not dirty condition of things inside. If I ever had up to this time, enemies, or if my friends had become enemies, nothing could have pleased them so much as to see or hear of my condition and surroundings.

Accidents always happen. Upon one occasion, when using the frying-pan, the stupid thing turned over, throwing the contents into the stove, and so came nearly setting my kitchen on fire. More than once a lamp exploded, and I had to fight flames for my life. Nothing filled my mind with so much fear as the thought that the town authorities would force an entrance into the house. Even in my sleep I would protest that all was right, and that the constable should mind his own business.

The only dangerous or painful affair happened one evening in the month of March. That morning I had attempted a cleaning up. A quantity of linen sheets and shirts hung on a line behind the stove. Whether I was reading or sleeping I cannot tell, but I was aroused by a glare in the room. Instantly I discovered that

the linen on the line had caught fire. The situation was desperate, and the fight which followed, though successful, resulted in a serious injury to myself. My hands and face were badly burned, and worse than all, my eye-sight nearly ruined.

My mental condition became worse as a result of my injuries. Without restraint I stormed and cursed. All that language could do to justify myself and damage others, was done there and then, and continued during the days and nights which followed. How I shudder at the oaths and imprecations uttered. Bell, book and candle was not to be compared to my excommunication of all men, and, of course, women. What a blessing to know that curses injure no one. The people I cursed so often, are all well and as happy and prosperous as anybody else. I wonder how mankind got the idea that one man's curses could injure another? I suppose that "anathema" is some rag of superstition due to circumstances and conditions of an earlier age.

Because of my devotion to nature, I began to keep pets. Wild animals, of course, wilder the better. My dumb companions were the cause of more than one adventure. Whether my devo-

tion waned or not, I concluded to let most of them have their liberty. I rather think the odour of the house became too unpleasant even for a bachelor. All left me but a collie pup I had named Romper. Speaking of Romper reminds me of another accident which befell me, and which came nearly being fatal.

CHAPTER VI.

Out in the yard was an old-fashioned well. From this well I drew water for my daily needs. One evening about dusk, I went out to draw water. Seeing leaves upon the surface of the water in the pail I concluded that the water was getting low. Having removed the covering, I knelt down and looked into the well. As I was kneeling, the scamp Romper sprang upon my shoulders, and before I could prevent it fell over into the well. Instant action was necessary, so I lowered myself down until my feet rested upon a beam which ran across the circumference of the well. Once upon a firm footing, I proceeded to balance my body across the beam with my hands extended downward in hope of reaching the pup swimming in the water. Whether I was careless or excited, or both, I know not, but I fell headlong into the water, a distance below the beam. Luckily the water was low, or the well would have been my grave. As it was I injured myself very badly, although I was not aware

of it for some time afterwards. Well, how to get back upon the beam was the question. Alas, the curbing was too even to enable me to climb by using fingers or toes, therefore my only chance of regaining my position was by springing up and catching hold with my hands. This I attempted, but to my dismay, I found that each attempt fell short and also left me weaker. With horror it dawned upon me that I must cry for help or perish. After all, I who had boasted of my sufficiency, I who had cursed my fellows, I who had withdrawn myself from human society, must seek assistance or die like a rat in a water hole. Never! I said, I will die first. Having faced the situation, and accepted the consequences, I became calmer. More by instinct than intention I began feeling with my toes for a break in the curbing of the well. My persistence was at length rewarded, and I regained the beam. From the beam, by the same method, I climbed to the surface. Romper all the while was floundering in the water. Remembering that there was a ladder on the place when I arrived, I went in search of it. After finding the ladder it did not take long to get the dog out of the well. The experience quite upset me. More than that, it humbled me and taught

me a lesson. After all, I was at the mercy of circumstances like every other man in the world. God made men to assist each other. To default is an injury to one and all. For the moment I felt sorry, and half resolved to change my mode of living. However, my good resolve was soon forgotten, and I succeeded in justifying myself; and renewed my vow to live alone and apart, as long as I lived, or at least, as long as my means would allow.

CHAPTER VII.

Nothing annoyed me more than the attempts of some of my acquaintances to supply me with delicacies. Someone thinking that my bill-of-fare needed changing, left a basket of pies and cookies on my doorstep. All day and all night I argued for and against receiving. Once I thought of drawing the blinds, putting out the fire, and keeping indoors, so as to give the impression that I was not at home. So long did I delay, that the parties who brought the basket, or someone else, took it away. My conduct upon this occasion surely must have disgusted everyone but myself.

Since those days, I have often wondered if there is an explanation for such conduct as mine. I think I know men to-day and in this town who are living much as I did thirty years ago. Men who are as unsociable as I was. Perhaps not for the same reason; but their conduct is much the same. Monks and nuns retire from the world, it is said, that they may live holy. But the monastic lives in a world of his own. He is sociable in his own place as those who live in the gay world. I am not excusing those

religious people. If they wish to live that way I make no protest. How much they gain, or how much they lose, I cannot say. All I know is, that I would not exchange my bed and board with any of the gentlemen who wear a cowl or hair shirt. If I were to ask the lady sitting by my side in the rocking-chair, she would quietly say with a smile, "Don't talk nonsense, John, please!"

As soon as it became known that I was going out mornings, some began to waylay me. What to do to escape them became a question. At first I concluded to stay indoors or move to another locality.

How strange that I did not think of seeing a little of the world. My money was in the bank subject to my will and pleasure. I might have travelled and improved myself in many ways. I know that it costs a pile of money to go far from home, but I think I would have paid my way there and back. I have seen quite a bit of the world since then, and enjoyed it, too. I have visited England, Ireland, and Scotland twice. I have seen the sights of Paris and Berlin without having to pinch at all. I suppose it is no use indulging in regrets, or asking why I behaved so foolishly. The plain matter of fact

was that I became irrational in some things. Considering that I had been cruelly treated, and thinking that most of people took sides with my former friends rather than with myself, nearly broke my heart. A little sympathy might have saved me. Instead of sympathy I received ridicule, and became a jest and joke, even on the street. The truth was my heart-strings were torn. I loved the woman tenderly and truly. She deceived me, and I became unreasonable and violent, and quite naturally wanted to be let alone. When my friends kept away, as they thought to better please me, I hated them for it. James Brodie was one of my best friends, but because he treated me according to my expressed wish, I came to hate him with a perfect hatred. That he should continue to respect Kate Hayes, and visit her house after the wedding, drove me to the verge of madness. How I wished some accident would happen to him on one of his hunting trips. Indeed I used to lie awake at night and think how easily something could happen to him.

However, in spite of all annoyance, I continued my morning's walk, and came to delight in it more and more.

What I saw and heard, and the people I met

in the out of the way places where I often rambled, would fill a book. And whilst I was gentleman enough to close my eyes and stop my ears when it became necessary, enough was seen to make one either talkative or cynical. Cynic I was, but not being talkative, the gossips of the town got nothing from me. Not that I cared for the domestic life and arrangements of my neighbors, not I. One half of the community might institute legal proceedings against the other half immediately, without causing me a moment's painful reflection.

How bitterly I resented the feeling of pity manifested by some I met during my walks. By some means I discovered that I was thought to be rather weak-minded. This I considered an insult added to injury. The parties who sought my religious conversion, or who wanted to borrow money, I could meet and manage, but those who smiled a sickly smile and made gestures, aroused all the latent bitterness of my nature. Later I heard that the lady who jilted me was responsible for the statement to the effect that I was feeble-minded. Lovers are all foolish; I was as foolish as the rest, perhaps more so. But it was malicious, extremely so, to say that my conduct or utterance betrayed weakness.

CHAPTER VIII.

Many were the attempts to offer me religious consolation. Of the ministers of the town, only one, the Rev. James Brownell, however, took the matter in hand personally. I do not blame them; I rather commend them for their conduct. I have been on speaking terms with priests and preachers all my life, and hold a high opinion of the cloth. Most of the clergy are educated and sensible men. Men who know when their services are necessary or desirable. My case was not one for the cleric of all men, or all professions. Even yet I am not considered very religious. Father McMann says I am the most hardened sinner that he is acquainted with. This he told me a week ago as we took a smoke on the lawn, and that to my face. However, he was good enough to say that he would take me into his church if I would conform. As he was leaving he said with a twinkle in his eye, "Good night, Meredith. Good night. Ye'r good company, ye'r good enough for me either in this world or the next."

The Reverend James Brownell was nothing

if he was not persistent. His method was to introduce both himself and his subject at the same time, by giving a tract. The morning he introduced himself to me, he must have risen early and for that purpose. Said he, "Good morning, Mr. Meredith!" I nodded my head and passed on. Catching up, he said, "Mr. Meredith, please take this little tract, 'tis a message of God's grace to your soul." Not wishing to converse with the reverend gentleman, I quickened my pace, hoping to be free from annoyance. Seeing my intention, he ran after me, pleading earnestly. My repugnance was to some extent overcome by the pleading of his tones. As I took the tract, he gave expression to ejaculations such as "Praise the Lord!" "The good Lord is merciful!"

Several times during the next two years did Mr. Brownell waylay me, and offer his services. The good old man, like many others, thought religion a panacea for all the ills of life. When later, his health and reason failed him, and he became an object of pity, no one could feel for him more than I did. Yet I am sorry to say that his faithfulness had much to do with my leaving town, and going into unsettled territory.

Notwithstanding the fact that I answered but few letters, I received many. I so seldom went to the Post Office, that the Postmaster had to send out a package every little while. Once he came himself, and he so lectured me, that I thought it best to go or send occasionally.

A lady named Mrs. Bins became interested in me to the extent of wanting to become my housekeeper. Her letters were truly feminine, and to say the least, were silly epistles. Her remedy for my bodily and mental disorders was a "house-keeper." The house-keeper was to be responsible for good meals and clean sheets. Nothing more than these were promised. Finding that I paid no attention to her letters, and thinking that attendance in person would settle matters, she came to see me. Fortunately for me I saw her coming, and locked the door before hiding in the shed. Not for long did I escape, for two days later she returned, and without knocking raised the latch. Before I could get through the back door, her portly form appeared and I was fairly caught. For once I was civil, almost polite. After she had explained matters to her satisfaction, I thanked her for her kindly interest, and told her that it was my intention to move from town shortly. To such

a scheme of things she positively objected. "Where will you go," she asked. "You a poor sick man without a friend in the world." I told her that I was neither sick nor friendless. Still she declared that I should not go, and that if I was determined to go she would go with me, and stay as long as she was needed. All such show of interest was lost on me and with firmness, I told her so. But not until I had promised to think the matter over, and possibly write her a letter, did she move to go.

After the visit of Mrs. Bins, I concluded to go away for the summer at least.

CHAPTER IX.

There certainly was a deal of method about my madness, if madness it was, consequently I began scheming to get out of town. When thinking over the matter of location, I remembered that I had once visited a large tract of unsettled country, fifty or sixty miles away. So I decided to visit that locality, and see what it was really like. I concluded that I could go by train to Riggsville, from there to Beecher's Point by stage, and walk or hire conveyance to any place I might select. I got a map, and aided by recollection of my former visit, I partly decided where I would reside. Alas for my hopes and expectations, for many strange things were to happen before I became settled, and much pain and sorrow too had to be endured before the word "Peace" was written, or rather carved over the fireplace of my fixed abode. During the five years I lived in the woods, I enjoyed very little peace. True I went away from the dwellings of men in search of peace. In that as in many other things in life, I was mistaken. I cannot say that I was

disappointed. Not in the light of subsequent events. Here was a man going into the wilds to avoid the activities of civilized life, to find there the things he wished to escape from, meet him at every turn and on every hand. A man-hater who lived to thank God and man for the sight of a human face, and the touch of a human hand. A woman-hater thrown into the company of a woman every day in the year. A man whose love had changed into hate and the bitterness of gall, yet to know a passion, the depth of which he had never known; a love stronger than life or death.

One of the best and wisest of things I did when making my arrangements for a change, was to send to Toronto for a good tent. I lived in this tent for months. Arab life has its drawbacks, but let me commend it to all who intend moving out of civilization. The civilized have a provoking habit of enlarging their borders, therefore the Arab must press on or be overtaken.

Once I had placed the order for the tent and supplies, and ordered them to be sent to Riggsville station by a certain date, I knew that I must go or make explanations. The thought of boarding a train in the light of day, with trunks,

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and a dog at the end of a chain, gave me hot and cold shivers. And somehow, I got into my head that someone might interfere. If it was generally believed that I was weak-minded, would some busybody seek to prevent me leaving town. My money was all safe in the bank, and the manager willing to make the necessary remittances as I might require from time to time. But what about the Smiths and the Jones' and others who were the guardians of each other; who claim authority in all religious and social matters. Would they let me go? Would they permit a feeble-minded man possessing ten thousand dollars in his own right, to go into the woods? For a period of three weeks I suffered agony of mind. For days and nights I argued and pleaded with them to allow me to go, to leave me alone and mind their own business; that I was capable of taking care of myself; that I knew what I was doing, and where I wanted to go.

As preparatory to my departure, I began to go about. I even went so far as to visit the station and make inquiries about trains and the price of a ticket. Everybody seemed a little surprised to see me. Some wanted to shake hands, and that too often. Indeed, I began to

take some satisfaction in showing folk that they were quite mistaken about me. Weak-minded indeed! A man who could make ten thousand dollars in business in ten years couldn't be weak-minded. To make that amount in a small country town, to be sensible enough to keep it, and all the while live soberly and quietly, is to give evidence of strength of mind and will. I did not say much, and less did I boast, but I told Brodie that I would surprise him some day. Since then, James has confessed that my return to business was the great surprise of his life. Three years ago I was elected Mayor of our town, and re-elected the second year with little or no opposition. A pretty good record for a man who less than thirty years ago was said to be feeble-minded by the gossips of the town. "Thanks, Julia dear! Thanks!"

The twenty-first of May arrived at length. That was the day I set for the delivery of the goods at the Riggsville station. Upon that day I expected to leave town. The local train was due to arrive at eight fifteen. Ten minutes would enable me to reach the station. Everything was ready when the clock struck the hour. I couldn't tell for the life of me whether Romper wanted to go or not. At the first strike, and

with a laugh that was half a sigh, I took up my burdens and called Romper out. The act of turning the key gave my nerves a shock, nevertheless I got away.

You may believe me that I took no very public thoroughfare to the railway station. In a spirit of wild mockery I cried: "O ye gods save me from meeting the Rev. Brownell, James Brodie, or the Widow Bins!" When I arrived at the station, I was so pleased to find only a couple of teamsters, two strange ladies and a few children there. Into the coach we got, Romper and I, and soon settled down. The local always did a deal of shunting, and that morning I thought she would never pull out. Nor did I hear the welcome toot toot until my nerves were quite unstrung.

How groundless were all my fears, and how little occasion there was for becoming excited or bad-tempered. I had the sense to see my folly, and vowed not to bother myself needlessly in future.

As soon as I felt myself free from possible interference, my feelings underwent a great change. I said, "After all no one cares about me. The Jones' and Smiths certainly don't care. Anyone, myself included, might go to the wilds

or to the devil for all they care.'' So to ease my mind, I damned all the Smith and Jones' for many generations.

Even after a lapse of so many years a feeling of shame comes over me as I write. In my sweeter moods I used to excuse myself by affirming that I never meant one half I said, and that I was not so profane after all. I never liked the idea that a gentleman should damn *ad lib.* Much of what is called profanity is only slang, red-hot slang, that's all. Perhaps! Perhaps not!

CHAPTER X.

The train arrived at Riggsville station nearly on time. Only a few people were on the platform or about the station, so I felt quite relieved. My first thought was to take the makeshift bus, but upon second thought, I began to make inquiries about the supplies ordered from Toronto. The agent was quite civil, so matters were easily and quickly arranged. Well I remember the occasion. The transaction of the business, small though it was, gave me a new feeling of being alive. I have since thought that a day's business at Riggsville, would in all likelihood have changed all my plans. However, it was not to be.

My only difficulty at Riggsville, was the matter of transportation. Beecher's Point on the Cedar River was twenty-two miles distant. How to get there with my trunks and freight was the next question. By accident, I overheard that the stage ran twice a week to the Point, and that it was expected to leave at three o'clock that afternoon. Looking at my watch, I found that I had not long to wait. The agent told me

that the stage started from one of the hotels in town, but that the stage would not take my freight, as they only contracted for passengers and mail bags. At the meeting of a real difficulty I became half helpless. What to do I did not know. Of course I began to wish I had never started from home. As I stood half dazed and looking so helpless, the agent said, "Are you sick?" I recovered myself sufficiently to answer, "No, sir; I am not." "Well," said he, "you look like a man who has had a long spell of sickness." What answer to make to the remarks of the agent, I did not know. Seeing that I did not wish to reply, he went away. Left to myself, I began to recover, and concluded that if I wished to reach Beecher's Point on the Cedar River some decided action would be necessary. Just then the agent returned, and said that if I would leave the matter with him he would hire a teamster to rush the things to the Point in a day or two. I quickly consented. Not too quickly, however, as there was scarcely time left to reach the place from which the stage started. Here again the good man came to my assistance. Calling a stout lad he said: "Here, Jerry, help this gentleman to catch the stage!" Jerry took hold, and we were soon on the way.

Arriving at the hotel, I found that there were only two passengers besides myself, taking the stage; and was pleased to find things ready for a start. No coy or bashful school-girl dreaded strangers more than I did. After a good deal of shouting, and some swearing, we were off. Off, as the hotel-keeper said, "For the last place God ever made and quit after the first day."

As I have said, there were two passengers besides myself, making the journey. The one a fine looking man of sixty or thereabouts; the other a man of thirty or thirty-five. The younger man seemed to know the older, for he asked: "How far are you going, Professor?"

"All the way."

"How far you go?" asked the Professor.

"To Pinchers."

"Ah!"

The short conversation between the men awakened my interest. Of the two I became most interested in the older. He was remarkably fine looking, and I imagined of foreign birth—German I thought. The hour's conversation that followed, was the most interesting I have ever heard from that day to this. The Professor has long been one of my friends,

and many the hour have we talked together, but never was he so interesting as when drawn out by the clever theological student going to Pinchers by the Riggsville stage.

"Fine weather!" said the Professor.

"Beautiful weather, sir!"

"We live in a grand country, don't you think so, Professor Schmidt?"

"Fine, good, very good," said the German, a little uncertain about his adjectives.

"You are not a Canadian, Professor?"

"Why not? Of course I am!"

"Well, what I mean is that you were not born in Canada."

"I was born in a country just as good."

"No doubt of that, Professor."

"No, I was not born in this country, but I am Canadian all the same."

"When did you come to Canada?" asked the student.

"I came to this country in sixty-eight."

"Then you came before the Franco-German war."

"Before, just before," answered the Professor, a little cautiously.

"When the call came to resist the French, you

wished yourself back in your own country, I have no doubt."

"I did, and I started, but my heart failed."

"Your heart failed! Why, Professor, you are a poor soldier."

"Dat may be so, but I was not afraid of the French."

"What were you afraid of then?"

"You are much inquisitive, Mr. Fleming."

"Unintentionally, quite unintentionally, Professor, so please forgive me."

"I will, seeing that you are a preacher."

Here there was a slight pause in the conversation as though both men were rather afraid of personalities. But not for long did the conversation lag. It was the preacher who started off.

"But, Professor, a great many Germans came to this country about that time."

"Many come all the time, Waterloo County is all German."

"Very true, and they are all fine people, Professor; but I often wonder why so many leave their own country and come to Canada. Are the political and social conditions so bad that they are compelled to leave? Or is this a better country?"

"This country is good, but their own is better."

"Then why do they leave it, Professor?"

"Vell, some of the men don't like the army, some get into debt, and some run away from the women."

"Nonsense, Professor Schmidt, you are fooling!"

"Fooling?" he replied, "never once!"

"Then you left—

"For three good reasons," said the Professor with a laugh.

"What were they?" asked the student, growing bolder.

"I gave them to you just now."

"What! You disliked the army, you were in debt, and you ran away from the woman you loved?"

"Just so."

"Then I was right, you are a poor soldier."

"Why so, when I was brave enough to run away?"

"Does it require bravery to run away?"

"Ach, you preachers are so dull, you not understand. To stay was a pleasure. To come away near kill me. Yes, Mr. Fleming, I was brave enough to come away. A brave man is

the man who does the best thing, and it was the best thing for the woman that I come away to Canada."

The theological student was silent for a moment, then he said: "You are a brave man and a gentleman, Professor Schmidt."

"Vell, I tell you the truth, because you think I was afraid of the Frenchman."

The journey was delightful for its scenery, but the road was rough. Being so interested in the conversation of my felllow-passengers, I had to a great extent lost sight of the beauties of nature. On we rolled and jolted in silence save for the crack of the driver's whip, and an occasional "gid-dap" to the horses. Coming to a break in the trees, the student broke the silence by exclaiming:—

"Look, Professor, isn't that a beautiful patch of green?"

"That is very nice," said he.

"Oh, but God has given us a fine country to live in." The last remark of the preacher seemed to arouse either passion or mischief in the old Professor, for he replied with warmth: "Foolish! God give you this country? You steal it from the Indian. Oh you church people, God is good to you, so you think. Yes, God

kill the Red Indian off, and give you his country. You his people."

For a moment the preacher was quite taken back, and when the conversation was resumed, I noticed the difference in the quality of voice, particularly of the preacher's. After that he was rather disdainful, I thought. It would have been well for both if they had left religion out of their conversation. But they did not, and the argument became fast and not a little furious after that. When the student preacher got out at Pincher's Corners both were quite warm. The fault of the preacher, or rather his mistake was, that he began to preach in a rather highly pitched monotone. As he, and quite ably too, as I thought, dwelt upon the manifestation of the Godhead in nature throughout the universe, the German cried "pantheist!" more than once. Later the preacher drifted into other subjects and the Professor cried "Manichean!" and worst of all, "Methodist! Methodist!" The older man was the wiser and much more adroit; the younger, well-read and really eloquent, and full of a fine enthusiasm. As they became lost to my presence, so did I become forgetful of all save the men and their argument. For once, and that in a long time, I really did forget my-

self. After all it was nice to be in a world of men and things, in a world of men who differed and could strive, when their strivings resulted in the enlightenment and enlargement of the mind and kindling of imagination. How often we hear of the evil of religious discussion, because someone's creed or temper gets the worst of it. If the fact were but known, we owe much of what is known, and believed, to the men who in all ages have differed religiously from each other.

CHAPTER XI.

Pincher's Corners was not much of a place to look at. It was here that the preacher got off the stage. The parting was quite civil, each hoping to meet the other again.

After giving the horses a pail of water at the pump, the driver told the Professor to get in, and we took to the road.

I rather dreaded being left alone with the good-natured German. And what a shock he gave me when he shouted, "Mr. Meredith, my name is Schmidt, Professor Schmidt they call me, and I teach the piano and violin." What I said in reply, I do not remember. Whatever it was, the Professor talked on and I listened with pleasure for a long time. His English was good, as good as any Canadian's, and his pronunciation only noticeable here and there in a long conversation. The road was very rough, and the noise of the wheels and clatter of the horse-hoofs drowned his voice, yet he talked of many men, and many things which greatly interested me. Of all the men I have ever met in a long life, I regard Professor Rudolph Schmidt

as the most learned and intelligent of mind and heart. From the day we met on the stage-coach, to the day of his death a few years ago, we have been fast friends. Twenty years of his acquaintance has proved a liberal education to myself and others.

Driving half headlong through a cedar swamp and over a corduroy road, we came to grief. A hole in the roadway gave us such a jolt that we had to stop for repairs. Both the Professor and myself sustained some injury by being flung against the sides of the vehicle and against each other. He lost no time in telling the driver that he was either drunk or asleep. Feeling my old habit of profanity coming on, and not wishing to give the Professor a bad impression of myself, I walked away. Once out of hearing I proceeded to damn the whole outfit. The repairs were soon made, and a little before sundown we arrived at Beecher's Point.

The stage stopped before the hotel, and as there was no choice in the matter of accommodation, I went inside. The Professor seemed to know his way about, so he went into the bar. People usually go to such places for something to drink, but Professor Schmidt went to see if he could get something to eat. I was as hungry

as I ever was in all my life, so I agreed to take supper with him. My first move after the meal was toward my room, but the music-master begged me to go outside and take a smoke. Solitude made me a fearful smoker. Later I gave it up, chiefly because I became half disgusted with myself and the habit. The Professor was quite as great a lover of the weed, so there we sat until bed-time. To be amongst men again seemed natural and manly, and I enjoyed it very much.

Just as we were thinking of going in, and to bed, we heard voices in the direction of the bar. Several men were hanging around when the stage arrived, but I thought they had all left. As the talking grew louder, the Professor became much annoyed and remarked that "liquor made fools." A little later he said that the hotel-keeper was away from home, and that only the women were about the place. As suddenly as a thunder-clap, a fierce yell rent the evening air. The yell was quickly followed by the sound of breaking glass and the shrieking of the women. The Professor jumped to his feet in an instant.

"Damn those drunken fellows, they are making trouble for the women," he said.

Hearing the savage wolf-tones, he sprang up. Another shriek, and he leaped up the steps and perplexed, and not knowing what to do then, something prompted me to follow the Professor. My short delay was fatal, for in the passage I met a mass of struggling men mad with rage. Not wishing to take part in the fight, I turned and fled. As I reached the door I looked back and caught sight of the Professor. The Teuton was terrible to behold. With a man in each grip, he came strident into the open, and with one mighty effort threw them headlong into the roadway. There they lay, until he and others went to their assistance.

Whilst the fellows were lying in the roadway the Professor, a little breathless, said:

"Why, Meredith, didn't you help me to get those brutes out?"

I said "it was none of my business, that if they wished to fight they could do so for all that I cared."

"That's all right," he said, "but they were smashing things and scaring the women. And no man should stand by and see women injured and property destroyed without lifting a hand."

His reproach angered me, and I felt like telling him that I cared no more for women than

for men; if anything a deal less. What I thought and what I said were two different things. In my heart I greatly admired the man and his action, so I said:

"Professor, you didn't need help, you did the job in grand style."

"I was mad," he said, "and they were little fellows and awful drunk. Damn me! I was a little too rough with them; see, they lie so quiet, yet."

His last words quite upset me. If those fellows were really very badly hurt, there would be trouble and a deal of talk; and I felt sure that I would figure in the affair, and that to my sorrow.

Presently two fellows came along and almost stumbled over the men lying in the roadway. They stopped to investigate. The Professor joined them. Upon his return, he informed me that they were not much hurt.

Now surely it was time for me to get out of sight, so I began to make inquiries about a room. The Professor heard me talking to the house-keeper, and shouted:

"Damn it, Meredith, we can't go to bed until these fellows go away!"

The horror of having to keep watch half the

night, smote me like a blight. Then as if to give weight to Schmidt's words we heard angry voices outside.

After some fuss, they made a rush towards the door. The Professor was on the alert and threw himself against the door intending to close it. He was a second too late, and so a bitter fight began for the possession of the doorway. On the outside were four men. The fighters had made friends and also enlisted the strangers. There I stood, and I am sorry to say, rather enjoyed the spectacle. It was a stirring sight. More than once it seemed that the party on the inside would win by closing the door. They would have succeeded, only that one of the sober men placed his foot between the door and the frame, and so prevented either latch or bolt from taking effect. After what seemed a short council of war, the fellows on the outside renewed the fight with even greater fury. So near did they get to gaining the day that the Professor got very mad. With eyes blazing, and a voice that shook the place, he cried out: "Damn you, Meredith, come here! Come you—"

He did not finish the sentence, for the women took fright and ran away, and the other fellows

were upon him. The sight of the fleeing women so pleased me that I laughed loudly. My laughter was soon cut short, for one of the chaps left the others to settle with Professor Schmidt, and made straight for me. As I tried to escape his fists, I protested, saying that I had taken no part in the fight. My protest did not prevent him from landing me a terrible blow in the eye. Stars showered around us. The pain and humiliation so maddened me, that I lost all control of myself from that moment. I was in the fight after all, though much against my wish. Knowing little or nothing of the art of defence, I could not be expected to observe rules. I knew that I was much the bigger and stronger man, and that if I could get hold of his body could throw him off with such force that he would not be likely to return. I worked to that end, and at length succeeded. My success awakened by whole body for the effort, and in my madness I threw him against the wall, and he fell in a heap on the floor. I thought I had killed him. Conscience cried:

"Murderer! Coward!"

Humanity protested through my whole being. Lashed by conscience and feeling, my reason reeled, and I fell upon the floor beside the man

I had killed. As I lay there I could hear angry voices, curses, and groans recede in the distance; and I heard no more.

CHAPTER XII.

Yes, I was in bed, that was certain, and my body was full of pain. And what queer feelings and sensations? Sometimes the room was flooded with sunshine; now it was all shadow, and so cold—my head, oh! my head—and my arm—oh, my arm!—what was that creeping over my face—was it somebody's fingers—yes, somebody was feeling or fingering my face and forehead. And I could hear voices,—whose voice was that? Why the Professor's, of course! He was talking to someone. "Doctor," he said, "that's a bad cut, isn't it." Doctor! I had no need of a doctor—never had. "He's coming round," somebody said. Coming round to where?

Well! Well! There I was propped up in bed, and stiff with bandages and splints from my waist to the crown of my head. And there sat the German music-master reading and smoking. In short order he told me what had happened. I swooned a little before my antagonist revived. He perhaps was only stunned. Seeing my helplessness and being full of revenge, he had taken a stick of stovewood out of the box, and

was using it as a club upon my defenceless body, when the Professor returning from the fray, entered the room. The return of Professor Schmidt, no doubt, saved my life. What a story to be sure. Sick and sore as I was, I tried to laugh, but it was no laughing matter.

The next day the Professor good-naturedly took me to task for not helping him and the women. He was not angry with me, but whether he intended it or not, he made me feel very mean,—never meaner in all my life before or since. At the end of his narrative, and account of his own doings with the other three fellows, I laughed outright, and such a laugh—it tastes good even yet, and did me a world of good.

In a few days I rallied, and the blood-letting seemed to have worked a miracle. Either the fight or the shock changed my mind about many things. I soon discovered that I was healthier in body and mind, than I had been for many months. After the pain of body left, I had only one thing to vex me. As I sat up in bed, I said to myself, "what if a report of this unpleasant affair should reach Forestville? What a fix I would be in for once, if James Brodie, the Rev. Brownell and the Widow Bins should call to inquire after my health!" Then there

was another vexing thought. What if the magistrate should make inquiry into the case? Were the fellows hurt, and would they claim damages? The worst thing I had to endure was myself. I was a coward. I had left the Professor, to fight for the women and the place. He fought his own and my battle, and also saved my life. Oh, but I was ashamed of myself! Once I thought it an ordeal to live with other people, and tried to live alone. But sitting up in bed in the hotel at Beecher's Point, and reviewing the events of the last few hours, and my own conduct and want of manliness, I wanted to get away from myself.

As I had lost faith in myself, I began to have more faith in other people. There was Professor Schmidt, what a fine man in every way. Just then his conduct contrasted with my own with much in his favor. And he had saved my life when I so little deserved it, and when he had all he could do to defend himself and protect others. Years after, my turn came to save his, at least he was good enough to think so, and that affair makes it a deal easier to live, now that my hair is getting gray, and certainly pleasanter to recall my past life and long friendship for Professor Schmidt.

The landlord of the hotel returned in a few days, and came at once to my room. He was quite cross and out of sorts. Of course the whole business was disgraceful from a moral standpoint. Surely, neither the Professor nor myself were to blame. We did not make trouble and I told him so. The morality of the case did not trouble him. He was afraid of appearing in court and having to explain matters. As a sort of consolation, he said that it was quite likely that Professor Schmidt and myself might have to appear too.

After the hotel-keeper left a very storm of passion and self-reproach swept over me; here was a nice state of things, and a nice situation to be sure. What a fool I was to start out on such a fool errand!

The Professor returned a little later. He was in no sorrowful mood, not he, for he laughed heartily at my fears. As for trouble with the law, or the law troubling us, there was no danger in the least. If there was, he would see Mr. Wilson, the local J.P., and explain matters to him. This he did for my sake, and that was all we ever heard of the fight for a long time.

CHAPTER XIII.

The cuts and bruises upon my head and face were not very serious, but my arm was broken above the elbow. The doctor said that it was not a bad break, and that convalescence was only a matter of time and patience.

At times I suffered a deal of pain and loneliness. The Professor only visited the village once a month for a week at a time. During his visits he was rather busy; and as he told me, owing to the settlement being Irish and German, rather than Scotch, he had a deal to do.

Two days later the Professor informed me that he would be leaving by the next stage. He said that he did a little farming as well as teaching, so he would have to go.

As he was speaking, the man from Riggsville arrived with my tent and supplies. I could not attend to the matter of settlement. The Professor was kind enough to attend to things for me, and I was very much relieved.

When Professor Schmidt returned in the evening, he was quite surprised to see me sitting up in a chair by the bedside. I was at the time taking a meal from a plate placed upon a chair, and feeding myself with one hand. After

filling his pipe, he began to talk, and talked of many things that interested me. When the woman came to take away the supper things, a child followed her into the room. The sight of the child made the Professor very playful. How he tossed the boy to the ceiling and rolled him upon the floor. They made so much noise and dust, that I became as cross as a bear and showed it, for the Professor took the youngster into the passage, and there they finished their play. Those Germans, how they love children! But why should a grown man and educated, behave like a school-boy. Such were my thoughts many years ago. Since then I have become a grown-up playmate to some half a dozen children, and so, quite agree with the Professor, and admire his conduct.

Returning to my room, he sat down on the foot of the bed and looking me straight in the face said: "Meredith, there is something wrong with you. You are made of queer stuff, or very badly warped, or perhaps you have been fooled, which is it?"

"Anything you like, Professor," I replied.

"But I don't like it, and I won't like you, unless you change and cheer up."

"Ach! You think I don't know. Damn it—(it was the only oath I ever heard Schmidt use)—you think I don't know. I know you, you used to court the Hayes girl and she fooled you by marrying Dan Hamilton. I used to see you about your place on Main Street, then I missed you for a long time, and never saw sight of you until you got on the stage at Riggsville. Why, Meredith, you are all going to pieces, all on account of Catherine Hayes. I know the woman. I used to teach her the piano. She's good, but there are lots of better."

That kind of talk was too much for me, and I was on the point of telling Professor Schmidt to mind his own business, when I remembered his kindness, and that in all probability he had saved my life, so I said rather coolly: "Professor, please make your remarks a little less personal." Then happened a thing which to me at the time seemed quite uncalled for, but for which I shall thank God to my dying day. The Professor's face betokened a look of great tenderness which touched me. After a pause in the conversation, he stepped forward, and bending over me as I sat there, he placed his hand upon my shoulder, and lowering his head, pressed his lips upon my forehead. "Ah! John Mere-

dith," he said, "I have loved and lost, like you. I know the bitterness of it." And then and there we wept together, the strong man and the weak one, wept and learned to love and to sympathise with each other through many and many a year.

Sitting there in the twilight, we told each other many things. Musicians, who are musicians only, are, as a rule, sentimentalists, and are often doubtful friends. Professor Schmidt was more than a sentimentalist, he was a fine type of a man. I cannot say that I like Germans more than men of other nationalities, but I have met more than one of the Professor's countrymen that I greatly admire. The German egotist is a boor of the worst kind, but when you get an educated, manly Teuton as a friend, you have a wealth all your own. What we told each other was, and is, sacred. When reading the story of David and Jonathan, I used to long for such a friend. Little did I think then that I would come to have such a friend in this world. When he died I called Julia into our quiet parlor, and with clasped hands we read together David's lament over Saul and Jonathan.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Professor left the following day. Shaking hands he said: "I will come back before you are away from here, and if you are gone I will find you. All this country is my country. The preacher was right, it is God's country, my country, your country. Good day!"

Left to myself, I fell back somewhat into my old moods and ways. To tell the truth, I missed Professor Schmidt. The doctor was good company, but so far from the quality of the man who had gone. I never could get friendly with Dr. Wesley Jones. He was a better doctor than a man. He was the most irreligious for a religious man that I ever met. He could talk religion like a Methodist preacher at a camp-meeting. I rather think that was why Rudolph Schmidt so disliked him, for he often said that if Dr. Jones was a Christian, he would like to be a pagan, or something else. How the doctor loved a case and a fee. He was cruel, even for a man whose cruelties are sometimes tender mercies. "Doctors shouldn't have nerves, I haven't," I once heard him say. But

the worst of Wesley Jones was that he had no feelings. He could and did to my knowledge, handle a broken limb with as little feeling as though he was handling a stick of wood. That he became rich, was his reward. Whether he thought that the present was surer than hereafter, a fat fee than a "heavenly mansion," I cannot tell. Only this we all knew, that his piety was too thick, and his Christian gentleness and generosity too thin.

A village hotel may not be the worst place to live in, but I am sure that it is not the best, and as soon as the doctor permitted, I made for the woods. In fact the village was "in the bush," and a more beautiful stretch of leaf and shade could nowhere be found. Every morning Romper and I made off for the bush, returning only when compelled either for food or shelter at night. Sometimes I wandered, or explored as great a distance as ten miles from the village. My main object was location for settlement, for I went in all directions, but generally along the banks of the Cedar River. June, in the woods of Ontario, is certainly next door to Paradise for any lover of nature. Sometimes I walked for miles with my head uncovered, and half breathless. Many a mile did I travel with-

out seeing the sun, and then suddenly emerging from the forest thickness, the light would burst upon me like a vision. Hour by hour have I sat watching the sunlight play upon tree-tops and branches. So rapt was I, that I sat for hours together, scarcely conscious of bodily existence, save when a squirrel or chipmunk ran across my limbs, or close by.

Where Little Creek joined the river, was a beautiful spot. The first time I made the discovery, gave me a thrill, and later a strange experience. I used to call it my conversion. The place is about twelve miles from Beecher's Point. A terrific thunderstorm had passed over the spot the night before I arrived, and the air was richly laden with freshness and perfume. A gentle breeze swayed the branches, and the birds were wild with delight. On either side of the creek and the river, were giant trees, mostly elm and ash, rich in color and drooping gracefully. Through the opening caused by the junction of the stream, the sun shone gloriously, and a little below, shimmered the water as it flowed over the white stones and sand. Ferns grew upon the banks, and drooping branches kissed the cool waters beneath. A wave of the tenderest and sweetest feeling swept over my being,

again and again. "What is this? Am I sick or becoming delirious? No I am not sick, this is too sweet to be sickness. Neither am I losing my senses." Then a rush of sweetest harmony forced my lips with laughter and song. I never considered myself musical, yet I sang with a perfect abandon, making melody seemed my vocation. Neither did I consider myself religious, yet I sang hymn after hymn, and hymns which I had only heard occasionally. Indeed I was not aware of the fact that I knew either words or music. How long the exultancy lasted, I do not know. How long I sang and prayed, sometimes standing, sometimes kneeling, I do not know. I who had scarcely prayed in all my life up to this. Then a wave of tenderest feeling, stronger and sweeter than before, swept my soul again.

"What is this? Is it divine love?" something seemed to say.

And I cried, "Oh God, I love thee, I love thee. Teach me thy will. Fill my heart with thy love, and with love for all men, and Oh God, help me, yes, for all men and women, the bad as well as the good, my friends and my enemies alike. Oh God forgive my hardness of heart and my foolishness in the world thou hast made for us to dwell in."

Perhaps I should have said nothing, or rather written nothing of such an experience. Seeing that I never made a public profession of religious conversion, I should have passed over the event. Ah! That is why I am bound to mention it. It was an event. And event, or call it what I will, that has changed much of my thought and life. If it was conversion, then I have been converted fifty times at least. Of all things mental, moral or spiritual, through which I have passed, these raptures have set me thinking. Why should I not study myself and my experiences? What to make of such, and of many things in my life, I do not know. But from that morning I have been a different man. I do not say a better man, yet I am sure that I am not mistaken about myself. Ideas and feelings which were a part of myself, ceased to be so. I came away from the dwellings of men into the wilderness, because I wished to be alone, and with as little intercourse with men as possible. I was not disappointed with my venture. Nature had not denied me what I asked. At the very moment that I was most satisfied with solitude I wanted to return to the world, and its striving and noise. All who had wronged me, were forgiven. I even went so far as to ask if I had

been wronged at all. I wanted to return to my friends and ask them to restore me to my place in their midst. All the old feeling of bitterness had passed away. I have never been able to explain either my feelings or my conduct. I am not asking others to do so either. That a sight of things beautiful in nature and art makes me the most happy and thankful man in the world, I know. I never wanted to see the holy places of any religious cult. The pyramids of Egypt, the last mummy excavated, could never move me in the least. But one hour in the woods around Beecher's Point, or the fresh sweet face of a settler's child, would fill my soul with music and delight, a delight which instantly found expression in melody and devotion.

No doubt I might be told, that there was nothing extraordinary about the experience described, that many persons of a spiritual turn of mind, constantly experience the same, and that much of the current devotional literature is due to periodic attacks, which in some respects are suggestive of epilepsy. I used to think so myself, and thought it quite necessary to exercise great caution. From the first day's experience, I made myself an object of scrutiny and study. But of late years I have given up the idea that

I was, or am in any sense epileptic. I had no thought of going back to play the part of a converted man. From that day to this, I have never spoken to anyone of what I call my conversion. Both from much religious reading, as well as hearing preaching, I had imbibed the notion, that conversion is a grace bestowed by the Divine Spirit upon those who accept Jesus Christ as Saviour by faith. Now, whilst I am not a believer in the same sense of having accepted the dogma of the church, I have passed through an experience which the orthodox claim for themselves exclusively. No name is as sacred to me as that of Jesus, and that in spite of the fact, that the evidences of Christianity in my estimation are of questionable value. I am not orthodox, for this I might be much to blame, yet the love of God has been the luxury of my life for thirty years. I do not deny that the most of people are converted under the direct influence of preaching and other forms of religious effort, but I do know, that I first became conscious of the love of God by contact with nature, and that contact with all that is beautiful in nature and art has resulted in a changed life.

The change of mind or heart from hatred to

love, produced some very marked changes in my way of living. The most noticeable to myself was the lapse of profanity. In my own estimation, my worst vice was that of cursing everybody who annoyed me in the least. The outbursts were often so violent, that I became prostrate for hours afterwards. Not that I had any great scruple of conscience, but for other reasons I tried to overcome the habit. All my efforts, however, were unavailing, until love had displaced hatred. Indeed I am satisfied that hatred is the cause of nearly all the sins, as well as the vices of men. Enthrone divine love in the human breast, and as a matter of cause and effect, you produce a great moral change in the life. When we are convinced, that not by the union of Christendom as a body accepting one creed, but by the possession of a divine quality called love, "The Kingdom of God" will come, a better day will dawn upon the earth and for all men. Let others think as they may, that the gift of the Spirit is faith; I am long since convinced that the great gift of the Holy Spirit is divine love. Once this divine quality becomes resident in the human heart, it becomes a power in the life. Loving God, we cannot hate our fellow-men. I have never joined a church, but

gladly would I unite with "two or three"; or all the world in a fellowship of service, with those who make love and not a creed the bond of union between themselves and God.

CHAPTER XV.

By the time I had regained the use of my arm, I found a place to pitch my tent for the rest of the Summer. Assisted by Dick Middleton, a village character, I got my things on the spot. As the place was fully twelve miles from the village, it was necessary to take a quantity of supplies. I intended roughing it, and toughing it, too, but I had no idea of putting myself on short rations. The rivers and creeks supplied me with fish, and the bush with game. Some said I could get bear meat if I wanted it. I replied that partridge and speckled trout were good enough for me. The keeper of the hotel said any man who went so far away into the bush was a fool, and that he would certainly meet with trouble. I said, that to stay at an hotel was to run some risk, and that my case proved it.

Dick Middleton worked and loafed about the tent for a week, and then returned to the village. I gave him a little money, and the sight of the currency suggested a return to civilization.

When my man of work had left me, I sat

down and tried to take in the situation. For weeks I had planned and worked for one thing, —"solitude." At last I had succeeded, and now could I say that I was satisfied? I could not, because of some ugly fears which possessed my mind. Nevertheless I tried to feel satisfied, and persuaded myself, that at least, peace and quietness would be mine, and that for a long time, seeing that years must pass before the country would be settled. Whistling for Romper, I sat there and tried to feel at home.

Exile by choice rather than circumstances, is after all, a very questionable blessing. I was until a short time before, a martyr; then I became an exile. Love changed the would-be martyr into an exile, and later the exile into a fairly sociable citizen. Love can do many mighty things, but even love must have time, and generally an agent in the person of a woman. It was so in my case. As a matter of fact, I am quite a step in advance of my life up to that time. Some things simply won't keep, and that is my excuse for telling what happened later.

I was comfortably settled in my tent by the middle of July. The days were hot and long. In the opening the heat was oppressive, but in

the shade it was either work or sleep with comfort. Of course the mosquitoes were there as everywhere else; seeing that I had no way of getting rid of the pests, they had to stay, and I to make the best of their company and attention.

I usually began the day with a drink of river water and a wash. Occasionally I took a cold plunge, but not often. The daily plunge into a deep pool, was a treat reserved for the heat of the day. Not for a year did I become so fond of a cold bath as to take it early in the morning, —say 6 o'clock. Cooking breakfast began about seven, for it was my rule to spend at least one hour out of doors. Fishing tempted me, and the sight of game urged the use of the gun; but my mornings for the first hour were sacred, and reserved for the beauties of nature, and peaceful thought and meditation. Without design, or forced intention, my thoughts were religious. The glory of the sunrise, the freshness of the air, the singing of the birds, the murmur of the river, impressed me greatly. How pleased I was, to find that in spite of some things past, that my mind and heart enjoyed devotion as a birthright, and that a sense of love and tenderness was so sweet. I had rather expected, that

being left alone would invoke some terror. But when the actual experience revealed the opposite, my joy was great. Even when fearful storms swept across the sky, and from dark clouds the lightning flashed, my peace was not disturbed in the least. This was all the more remarkable, considering that I was not raised religiously. God was so real to the heart, and so comforting to the imagination, that no argument was ever needed to produce or encourage faith. From that day to this, I have not been troubled with doubts as to the existence of God. I have doubted much and many, but never the existence and goodness of God. The solemn grandeur of the forest, the glory of the rising and setting sun and solitude of my exile, accompanied as it was, by every possible aspect of truth as taught by nature, was the means of an awakening of the soul by the Divine Spirit. I was, as might be expected, much more religious than philosophical in those days. Since then I have read much and travelled a little, consequently, I have some doubts as to the claims of Christianity and the immortality of the soul; yet I have never for a moment doubted the existence and imminence of God. Ten years ago, by a better arrangement of my business affairs,

I began a course of study with a view to a better understanding of the claims of Christianity. My mind is not settled, I am not convinced; far from it, that the church has made good her claim as a whole, yet I am convinced that Jesus has saved the world. Nothing but a revelation of God as Father, and that to the consciousness in an intelligent state, can ever save men. Jesus has made that possible, and certain for all who hear him. Beyond that, I cannot go. It is a most valuable certainty to me to-day, and the certainty has its value in a loving and trustful heart, due to the fact of my exile, and by a Providence which never ceased to watch over me for good. I do not doubt that some doctrine, say that of the Atonement, may produce a better character and experience than mine. But I am thankful that nature, and natural beauty, was used so successfully in my case, at a time when the mind was in such a state, that nothing else could reach my heart. Man is capable of seeing and feeling God. The invisible through the visible. And I hold it as a great truth, attested to by my own experience and life, that to see and feel God, is to adore him as God. Love must express itself by adoration.

CHAPTER XVI.

Nearly a month elapsed before Romper's barking announced a visitor. As he came nearer I recognized the man Middleton. He came according to arrangement, with letters and a few small things by way of supplies. I was rather glad to see the fellow and to get some news from the outside world. Not that I expected letters, for I had taken some pains that no letters should be forthcoming. How eagerly I questioned Middleton, but to little or not purpose. One thing I had miscalculated, and that was, that once out of the world, I would lose all interest in its affairs. Let no man mistake himself in this respect. He may be sick and out of sorts with everybody and everything, but he is not out of the world until he has fallen a prey to the funeral director; and never quite dead and buried until the grass has grown green upon his grave.

Knowing that Dick hung around upon the arrival of the stage, I asked if there had been any visitors at the Point lately.

He said, "Nobody to count"; yet when he mentioned certain names, I recognized some local people of note, and a politician or two.

The next morning Middleton informed me that there had been a great row and mix-up at the hotel, and that the old German piano man had beaten two men badly, and having returned they, with the help of others, had "done him up." Knowing that Dick was giving me a belated account of my own misfortunes, I only smiled. Seeing me smiling, he said, " 'Tis gospel truth all the same."

Romper and I went a mile or so with Dick, as much out of sympathy for ourselves as for him.

Our walk cost us a good deal, for whilst we were away some persons, Indians or stragglers, had called, and also looted our tent besides doing a deal of mischief. Such wantonness annoyed me much. So we were not the only people about, Romper and I. Solitude, or even privacy was impossible, and daily watchfulness would be required. To watch day and night was a task I did not think I could successfully perform, so I passed it on to Romper. How well the faithful collie did his duty will be interesting, when the time comes to tell it.

The only letter Dick Middleton brought was the following, and will explain itself:—

MONTREAL, Que., July 2nd, 1882.

C. E. Willis, Esq.,
Manager Provincial Bank,
Forresthill.

Dear Sir:—

A few weeks ago I received a letter from my brother, John Meredith, informing me that he had closed his office after having disposed of his business, and was upon the point of leaving town. He also said that I was not to write unless it was absolutely necessary, and that if I wrote, the letter must be addressed to you.

Now, such conduct on the part of my brother is singular, to say the least, and not a little disquieting. John was always considered capable of taking care of himself, without the assistance of anybody. What has happened? If he is sick or in trouble, would you be kind enough to inform me with as little delay as possible. You can well imagine the state of my mind, and as a gentleman, will, I know, comply with my request, seeing that it is perfectly reasonable.

Respectfully yours,
WILLLIAM MEREDITH.

Mr. Willis also sent me a copy of the reply, and is an example of what an intelligent and sympathetic man can do under circumstances calling for tact and kindness.

FORRESTHILL, July 12th, 1882.

Mr. William Meredith,
Montreal.

Dear Sir:—

In reply to your letter of the 2nd, I beg to inform you that your brother has not taken me into his confidence unnecessarily, but that I know his whereabouts and intentions.

Your brother, sir, is as you say perfectly able to take care of himself at all times and under all circumstances; and you should not allow anything to the contrary to disturb your peace of mind. Mr. Meredith left a short time ago for an unsettled part of the country. If he has gone in search of health, fame, or fortune, he is sure to find, because these are plentiful in a climate and country like ours; particularly to a man of the stamp and character of John Meredith. Not a week can pass without my knowing of his location and intentions. Should the condition of his health, or the management

of his estate require your assistance, I will notify you with as little delay as possilbe.

Believe me, dear sir,
I remain your obedient servant,
C. E. Willis.

Before leaving town I wrote to my brother William. At the time of writing, I did not think it necessary to furnish him with particulars concerning myself or conduct. However, Mr. Willis' letter was all that was required to meet the case.

What a world this is! We like to think ourselves free and in possession of ourselves, at least. Yet when we step aside for a moment, or wheel out of the common rut, someone is sure to ask for an explanation or perhaps an apology. To some extent a man belongs to himself, and is a law unto himself; but sooner or later, he is sure to find out that he is related by natural ties to one-half the world, and bound by custom and convention to the other half. "Give an account of yourself" is the daily demand. Old Maxwell, my neighbor, tells me that he can never go down street, but upon his return his wife stares him in the face, which is as much as to say: "Where have you been and what

have you been doing? Come now, give an account of yourself and that at once!''

He vows that he would elope with the hired girl, only that he knows that she would stare the same way and ask the same silly questions.

A bachelor's life is beautiful for its inconsistencies. Only a woman knows how to make good bread, yet a man will dare make the attempt. My bread-making was quite paradoxical; it was both a success and a failure. It was never very light, and in this respect a failure. It was never very sweet, consequently I could never eat too much. This proved my success. Another point which I had nearly forgotten: my bread was of such a quality that it prevented Dick Middleton in the laudable enterprise of clearing out my cupboard when he came.

But I could broil fish and fry potatoes with any housekeeper in the country. Yes, and I could make tea, too, tea that would make a Duchess drink four, and sigh for a fifth cup.

We were all gipsies once. Why did we change our way of living? Evolution I suppose. Well, evolution should have perfected the nomad before going to work upon the resident. As gipsies we might have amounted to something, but as town and city folk, they say we

are going from bad to worse. Would it not be nice to see everybody living in a beautiful forest, and as happy as birds and squirrels. And how do we know that they are happy? Because they have so few needs. People whose wants, or better, whose needs are few, are always happy. Our civilization is far too complex. Some day when we have tried everything else and failed, we will begin to simplify life and at the same time begin to live and enjoy it.

A whole month passed before Middleton returned again. A whole month living with trees, birds, rabbits, squirrels and a dog. What a life! It was delightful, but attended by some disadvantages. To live without seeing a single human face, or hearing a human voice for thirty days is a novel experience. Delightful as it was in some respects I would not recommend it to everybody. My own opinion is, that it would end in insanity. During my first winter in the woods, I was alone for successive periods of four and six weeks. Hunters in the Fall were more numerous than stragglers in Summer, and a much better class of visitors. Certainly some were as jovial as spirits could make them. I have heard of hunters and trappers living for a long time without seeing or hearing anyone.

Robinson Crusoe is a classic example. All I have to say is, don't try it for any great length of time. Should some self-appointed task, say the writing of a book, or the perfecting of an invention, require privacy, obtain it; but never shut yourself out or away from daily intercourse with others. Of the ten years of my life spent in retirement, I consider that six were spent in prison. True I had my liberty and a small world all my own, yet I was a prisoner, and on the silent system. Six years without seeing a single face but my own, and that only occasionally in the mirror. Six years without hearing a human voice. That my case was exceptional, and that I derived great benefit from living alone and near to nature's heart, I am willing to admit. But the loss of time and the gap made in life, were great discounts. I go to the woods every Summer, and have done so for a month at a time for twenty-five years, yet all the money in the world would not induce me to remain there. Think of wars, elections, births and deaths, a thousand other events social and political, happening and one knowing nothing about them until some years afterwards. To have to stand and listen to your friends relate so many things during their conversation, and

try one's best to look interested or hide one's ignorance, is not pleasant. I had nature and books and a few good pictures, but all these and much more, are but poor substitutes for men. And the hunger—well, I never was an admirer of men of Dick Middleton's class and kind; he was lazy and dirty and shiftless, yet my first impulse was to embrace him. As it was, I shook hands so warmly that Dick was surprised.

CHAPTER XVII.

Middleton stayed over night, and I was really sociable and that without any great effort. Dick gave me a pleasing piece of information when he informed me that he had talked with Professor Schmidt, and that the Professor was coming out to see me and also going to remain a short time.

Dick returned to Beecher's Point; Romper and myself remained at home watching the stuff.

The letters brought were not important. Mr. Willis wrote making inquiries about my health, and urging me to return to Forresthill or make good preparation for the Winter. As I had no intention of returning to town, I decided to lay in a quantity of supplies and also erect a lodge suitable to the rigour of the Winter season. So after spending some time in planning and contriving, I started for the village. Before leaving I had to dispose of things I wished to keep. Some I hid in hollow trees, and the rest I buried with branches and underground. I arrived at Beecher's Point a little before noon, having

walked a distance of over twelve miles. The first sounds to greet my ears resounded from the anvil of the smithy, and sweet they were even to my unmusical ear. The first sight was that of some half-dozen small children playing on the roadway. The sight of their pretty faces so touched me that I paused for a moment to watch them play. Returning to the village was a sort of homecoming. The state of my mind and heart revealed the fact that I was a changed man; so changed was I, both in thought and feeling, that I hardly knew myself.

The hotel-keeper and his wife seemed glad to see me. They informed me that Professor Schmidt had left on the stage the day before.

On this visit I took occasion to take a good look at the village for the first time. Beecher's Point is now a town of fifteen hundred inhabitants; then, it consisted of one hotel, a general store, a smithy, a doctor's office and a dozen houses besides. On the west and on the southwest, there was quite a large but scattered settlement, and owing to Beecher's Point being much nearer than Riggsville, the settlers did most of their trading at the Point.

Two days proved sufficient for the transaction of my business, so on Friday Romper led the

way home. Yes, home! For in spite of all that awaited me, and by some strange intuition I knew it, I felt that in the depths of the forest there was more happiness and greater security than anywhere else, at least for me.

During the next week my supplies and building material arrived. The two men who had contracted to do the teaming were quite out of temper and demanded more money. They contended that there was no road, and that it took them nearly three days to make the twelve miles. As it was, they left the stove and other things behind. Knowing that they must have met with many difficulties on the way out, and that I was nearly helpless, I gave them what they asked. Seeing that I was not too hard on them, they promised to make another journey in a week or two, for the purpose of bringing the stove.

The next few weeks were quite eventful. My time was taken up with building. Before I was half through I found that I would be compelled to go to the village for nails and more roofing, and also to urge upon Watson to bring out the cooking stove.

By the time I had made myself comfortable Winter drew near. Even before my stove ar-

rived we had a little snow. But by the time I really began to suffer to any extent, I was ready for the winter season.

It was with no little feeling of pride that I viewed my dwelling, and congratulated myself that I was quite prepared for what might happen. Work is a great blessing. I know there is nothing profound nor original about such a remark. But there is a deal of originality about the personal appreciation. Success gives labor a relish. I had worked hard, and as I thought succeeded beyond my expectations. My health was perfect, and my spirits good; surely I could congratulate myself, or rather preacher Brownell and Mrs. Bins whose kind attentions had sent me into the woods. And yet to be honest, there was a feeling of thankfulness to God within my heart. And well I remember, standing erect and with uncovered head under the trees at my door, offering up a simple but heartfelt prayer.

During the fall months I had a few callers, or rather passers by, call on me. They were all strangers and more surprised to see me than I was to see them. Of course they asked a number of questions and got evasive answers. That was not my fault. I saw no good reason why I

should furnish everybody with a full explanation of why I chose to build a small house far out in the bush. One man, quite an intelligent fellow, who told me his name was Thompson, looked quite surprised. He stayed half the day, and upon leaving shook hands, saying, "Good day, I am pleased at having met you and hope to do so again some time."

Just as I began to wonder if Professor Schmidt would keep his promise, he arrived. Romper was out on one of his foraging rounds and away off in the bush when I heard his bark. The dog always warned me when strangers were near. His bark was loud and vicious usually, until I called him to come away. On this occasion he stopped barking, and so alarmed me. Thinking something had happened him, I went in that direction and met my friend and the dog coming along together.

"John Meredith, how do you do!"

"Quite well, Professor, thank you, and how do you do!"

"Oh, I am all right, now that I have found you. But man, I have walked miles out of the way trying to get here. The season is getting on, and this is my last visit to the Point, and I was bound to see you once again. You

know I never go far away from home during winter. There are no roads broken far from the towns and larger villages."

"Well, Professor, I am very much obliged to you for such kindness. Come along, you are tired and must be hungry."

Coming to the house the Professor said with surprise: "Vell! Vell! What you do? You build a house? You going to live here always? All time? You great fellow, John Meredith! Great fellow! I say."

When inside, he lost control of himself. Taking off his cap he threw it at Romper, and in sheer mischief chased the dog, as he would a child, around the room. His delight at what he saw made me very happy.

Whilst I was preparing a meal, Professor Schmidt walked around, and in and out, all the time humming some old tune.

I had occasion to go out to the wood-pile. On the way he met me, and throwing his arms around me began to wrestle. With perfect abandon we wrestled and fooled like schoolboys. Laughter and noise echoed through the woods, Romper barked, and rabbits, squirrels and birds scampered and fluttered in their half fright. Sitting on the ground, both quite ex-

hausted, the Professor recited something in German. What it was I never knew, but from the look of deep seriousness upon his face, it was the expression of some great and beautiful truth.

And what do you think we had for dinner that day? What would you expect a poor, friendless, feeble-minded man living out of civilization to spread before a friend. Well, we had roast partridge, speckled trout, baked potatoes, new bread, apple pie, three kinds of nuts and half a dozen varieties of wild fruit dried for table use, tea, and water from the spring. Pretty good, you say? I say so, too.

"Living in the bush is the thing, John," said the Professor. "If I had my woman and the two boys here, I would stay all winter."

After dinner and a smoke, we took a walk, visiting some of my favorite places up and down the river bank. And how we talked!

The Professor gave me the news of the locality and the world at large, and I listened attentively you may be sure. Schmidt was a fine conversationalist, but one of the rare kind that wants others to talk as well as himself. And he was no mere newsmonger. Things at home and abroad were deeply significant to him. London,

Berlin, Paris, and New York, were world centres, and what was said and done was important as expressing the world spirit and progression of mankind. Nothing interested him unless it was human. A God there was, but man was his creature and offspring. On the other hand, he was not completely absorbed by national and international events. Local affairs and persons counted for much. The world movements were all local to begin with, and equally important and of value to the world at large. Even the birth of a baby girl in the settlement was an event.

"Old Snyder," he said, "will need to move round quick, that is nine little mouths to fill." And so we talked until dark.

I thought the Professor would be tired on account of his long walk, but no, as soon as supper was over, he lit his pipe and drawing from his pocket a nicely bound book, began to read.

Looking up, he said: "Meredith! You like Goethe?"

"Goethe, Professor? Who is Goethe?"

"What! You don't know Goethe? You never read 'Faust'?"

"No, I don't know Goethe, and I never read 'Faust,'" I replied.

"Well, I thought you had read nearly everything. You have read a good deal, I know."

"Thank you, Professor, but I can assure you that I have not read much. I came by a part of an old preacher's library ten years ago, and I have bought a few books since. My reading has been mostly history and theology. What is Faust?"

"Oh, Faust is poetry—drama—and you must know Goethe! He is great! We Germans, some, think him greater than your Shakespeare. This is German, this book, but I will get you the English of 'Faust' and send it in by the stage."

That night as though by accident, a new world opened to me. The Professor read and translated "Faust." As he read and translated, he also explained. The wind-storm roared without. The giant trees, defiant though they were, bowed their heads before the fury of the storm-king. In a little hut or cottage sat two men, one reading, the other listening. The listener listened with intensity, every sense alert. Forms passing and repassing before his eyes, Mephistopheles, Faust, Margaret, evil spirits, good spirits. What did it all mean? What kind of

a world was this after all? Was "Faust" a picture of mortal existence? Was it life, or the strange fancy of a great man carried beyond reason by genius and ambition? Was there nothing but learning and lust in Goethe's world? The little clock on the shelf told the midnight hour; the storm raged as though voicing the fearful tragedy of life. Devils tempting men; men tempting women, and all doomed together. A thousand things passed through my mind. Things that loosed my tongue. The Professor answered my questions, but answering one only prompted others. Then it occurred to the Professor that he should tell me about Goethe the man. Three hours after midnight there we sat. He told me of Goethe as a student at Strasburg. He told me of the struggles of his early manhood, against vice and doubt. He told me of the women Goethe loved, and the effect of their love upon the great man's life. He talked long of Goethe's writings and philosophy of life, and of his long residence at Weimar, and his visits to Italy, and of his friendship for Schiller. So fascinated was I, that after he had told me of Goethe's death and the German loss, I made him tell me the second time of the poet's love for the Frau Von Stein.

What a night! And what a world I was in, in company with so many others; some great, some small, some good, and some not so good. An hour or so before daybreak, we both fell asleep.

During the next two days we walked and talked much, principally of Goethe and "Faust." I say a new world became known to me. Beginning with "Faust" I read in the next few years all the leading dramas. Professor Schmidt sent me the books, some from his own library, and some he ordered; yes, and some, or at least parts, he translated both from the German and Greek languages for my use. "Faust" was only a beginning, and to tell the truth, Faust soon lost its power over my mind and heart. The second part of Goethe's masterpiece I dislike, and once told my friend as much. After Faust I read Shakespeare. Then the Professor thought I should become acquainted with the great Greek dramatist, and so he bought me a translation of Euripides. A year later I obtained copies of Sophocles and Æschylus.

What a wealth of books there are in the world!

And oh! the paradox! I who was sick of the world and had to leave it, came to know it

almost by accident. Became acquainted with it when out of its power and sphere. In solitude, and away from its din, I heard the anvil strokes of its power; when dead to its life, I felt its great heart throb.

CHAPTER XVIII.

After the going of the Professor a thoughtful mood took possession of me. For hours together I would sit with my head upon my hand. I read a little. But to think of what I had read, and of what I had lately heard, seemed to be my vocation. It is thinking that makes the man. Character is only a reflection of the inner man. Given the conditions and circumstances, it is quite natural for man to think. All that education can do, is to train the mind to think rationally. Having taught the individual to reason and act as a result of conclusions arrived at, education has made the man. And the making of a man is the making of a great thing. The difference, it seems to me, between an educated and an uneducated person is the difference between thought and impulse.

Take my own case as an example. The course of action I took when thirty years of age, would have been impossible ten years later. Impulse guided, or rather impelled me to renounce the world, and later in a fit of sheer

desperation to renounce life. As I sit here at sixty years of age, I see the folly of such a course. Then I felt everything and saw nothing. By that I mean, that I was guided, or rather driven by passion and feeling and not reason. Later as a result of the course of events, there came a spiritual and mental awakening of the man. The man once awakened and poised, refused to act even in the smallest matters, without thought, and when he did so, it was with intelligence and success.

The parting between myself and Professor Schmidt was rather sorrowful. He thought it was a risky thing to live alone so far from others. I did not see or feel the risk. Not then, but later I made the discovery, when it was almost too late.

"Now, John, promise me, that if you get sick a little, you will go over to Snyder's."

"Who is Snyder, and how far is it to his house?" I asked.

"Why Snyder is the nearest settler to you. He lives about three miles southwest of here. Follow the river down to the clearing, and you see his house on the right-hand side."

What a surprise it was to me to know that Snyder or anybody else lived so near. Indeed,

I was shocked to think that my plans had so nearly failed.

I must not enter into details as to my life and experience during my first winter in the bush. True to my instinct, or rather religious feelings, nothing happened to either Romper or myself. We spent the weeks together, and valued each other's friendship greatly. My health was perfect, and my occupation all that anyone in my circumstances and frame of mind could wish. I did not go to Snyder, but he came to me about the middle of January. Whether he came out of fear or curiosity, I do not know, but he came and seemed not a little surprised at what he saw.

"My name is Snyder, and what is your name, please?" he asked.

Pleased with the man's frankness, I answered with civility. He was a rather poor looking fellow, hard worked and barely clad. He told me he had lived on the bend for more than five years. He once lived in Riggsville, and was a harness-maker by trade. Snyder was a married man, and the father of nine children.

The Winter seemed long, as long as the days were short. Wood-chopping, a little hunting and walking were my daily sports. Domestic cares

such as cooking, washing, and mending, occupied me when indoors, and not reading. Having little to read that I had not read before, my time was mostly spent in musing and thinking about many things. Goethe's "Faust" and the things that the Professor had told me about the man, held the possession of my heart and mind nearly all winter. I could not tell the extent of his power over me. Then by some law of the mind, unknown to me, a reaction set in, and "Faust" was forgotten. Not that my idol turned clay, but rather by some law, a powerful reaction set in and even Goethe the man passed out of my mind.

I was not sorry to find that I had changed, or that a change had been wrought. I had become a slave to one person, and that person living in name and fame. Only for one night and two days had I heard of Goethe and Faust. No doubt, that the earnestness of Professor Schmidt might account for my devotion, but really and truly it was not a good thing for me to be thinking of life as viewed by Goethe and "Faust," as interpreted by Professor Schmidt. Later I received my first copy of Shakespeare, and read and re-read until my eyes began to fail me. But I never surrendered myself mind

and heart to the "Bard of Avon." This is remarkable, too, when I consider that from the first day's reading of Shakespeare, I became convinced that he was greater than Goethe. Not for a long time did I tell my friend Schmidt what I thought of the two men and their work. Only when he demanded of me an expression of opinion, did I do so; and all he did was smile, and say something in an unknown tongue.

CHAPTER XIX.

As soon as winter had passed, and the roads were open, I started for Beecher's Point. All along the way I noticed things that gave me pleasure. Indeed, I was in a pleasurable mood. The idea of seeing the world again, was pleasing in the extreme, although I knew that the world was not much in evidence at the village to which I was going. No one can imagine how my heart leaped when I heard again the anvil of the smithy. Without scarcely knowing what I was doing, I went into the shop and began talking with the smith and his helpers. They seemed no little surprised to see so great a stranger. Had I answered all the questions asked, they would have been wiser than I wanted them to be.

Going to the hotel was an adventure of a kind. The people there stared at me much more than was pleasant, but I understood them, and so made no complaint.

Baxter, the hotel-keeper, vowed that he thought I was long since dead, and my bones picked. When he saw me healthy and clean shaven, he was more than surprised. As for

his wife, she said that some nights she couldn't sleep when thinking of the "man in the bush."

"The man in the bush" was a kind of myth to most of the villagers, but real enough to Mrs. Baxter, it seems.

"God is good to sinners," said the pious Dr. Jones, "or you would not be going about."

"No doubt, Doctor," I replied, "seeing that you have been allowed to grow grey-headed."

He laughed a little and invited me to dinner. I did not go. Few doctors have ever been my friends, and of the few, Dr. Wesley Jones comes further off than the last. Not because he considered me a great sinner; I have no quarrels with anyone on that count, but because of his dreary sentimentality. A man who can whine about religion for hours together is no fit company for me. Others may enjoy the luxury if they please, but as for myself, I will not. For the intelligent and devout church member, I have much respect and even affection, for the kind who have special revelations direct from heaven and that almost daily, I have a strong dislike. Men of the "old school," as country practitioners, were equal to most of the "new." But as a blunderer, and that in spite of his "spiritual gifts," Dr. Jones was easily first.

During this visit I became acquainted with J. F. Wilson, the local J.P. Mr. Wilson was a Scotchman, and one of the first settlers, and a man worth knowing. His love of farming and books was the making of himself and half the people in the village and the settlement. Men of his stamp and worth impressed themselves upon many an Ontario community thirty and forty years ago.

My inquiries at the hotel respecting Professor Schmidt, yielded me no consolation. He had not arrived they said, and would not for another month.

Money matters necessitated my going to Riggsville by the stage. But owing to the kindness of the storekeeper, things were arranged, and after buying supplies and writing letters to Mr. Willis and a few others, I returned home.

I had not been home more than a week, when I was surprised to hear sounds of chopping away off in the bush. My nearest neighbors were the Snyders, but I never heard sounds of their whereabouts. Surely no one could be thinking of settling so near; if so, I would move, I said to myself.

Every day I heard sounds at a distance which

greatly aroused my curiosity. More than once I went in the direction from which the sound came. Not until Professor Schmidt paid me his first visit of the season, did I learn what was going on, and what the sounds meant.

Sitting down for an after-dinner smoke, the Professor remarked that I would soon have near neighbors and very nice people, too. With a little anger, I asked him to explain what he meant.

"I mean that the Campbells are coming," said he with a laugh. "Not the pipers, John, but Milton and Julia."

"Who are they?"

"Oh, you don't know the Campbells, perhaps not. Well, they are from Riggsville. I know them. I used to teach Julia the piano. Milton is a nice fellow, but he should be in school. He's a doctor or soon to be. I don't think he is strong. He has a weakness, and they are moving out of town for his sake."

"What kind of a weakness?" I asked.

"Well, John, I ought to tell you the whole truth, a weakness for liquor and opium and some other things. Students are all that way, or most of them."

"And what would they do out here? I

should think this locality would be the last to bring such a person to."

"He couldn't get liquor and drugs out here, surely?"

"Perhaps not, but would he improve, and would he stay, do you think?"

"I don't know, John. No, he won't get better, and he'll not stay for long I doubt, but they are coming. The old man came out by the stage, and he told me so; that is, Milton and Julia are coming. He is sick, very sick and she is going to nurse him. Two Toronto doctors say that he must be taken away, a long distance from town, and where liquor and drugs can't be bought either for love or money."

I said nothing more just then. Later I told the Professor that if settlers came in, I would move out or back further on the river. With good sense, and plainly, he told me it was no use, that the country was settling up rapidly. He said that I could go nowhere but I would find someone there before me or soon after.

The next week as he was leaving Professor Schmidt said: "John Meredith, come with me a bit out, and I will speak to old Campbell as we pass."

I refused to be made acquainted, and begged

of the Professor not to tell the old gentleman that I lived anywhere near.

"Too late," he said, "I told him on the stage. I told him that Milton and you would get along fine together."

That was more than I could stand.

"Surely you did not take such liberty," I said quite coolly.

"John Meredith, you are much better, and you can help a poor fellow like young Campbell. He is a good lad, only for the drink, and would succeed in life."

"I am better, much better, and I thank you for so much help. But do you think I am as well, or so much of a man and a gentleman as to be bothered and plagued with such a fellow as you have described?"

"Well, come with me and I won't say anything to the old man. Come on!"

I went with Professor Schmidt and about half a mile, or a little more, we came upon a clearing and found a small log house in course of erection. Mr. Campbell was pleased to see the Professor, and they talked for some time. What was said, I do not know, but the Professor did not attempt to make me and the old gentleman acquainted. As we walked on, I felt quite

ashamed of myself. It was something of the old bitterness of the past. Shaking hands with the Professor I asked him to forgive me. He promised to do so if I would go back that way and speak to the "father of the boy," as he called him. I promised to do so, and we parted.

That day, yes, and that moment, I made a great discovery. Professor Schmidt was not an infidel as so many supposed. Holding my hand in his for a moment he uncovered his head. Then kissing me upon the cheek he went his way. Never have I looked upon such a face since. That uplifted face was seraphic. It was divine. Love and faith and hope were written there, or rather shone there.

I returned, and on the way called and spoke to Mr. Campbell. I found him to be intelligent and of a kindly disposition. Later I found out that my first impressions were confirmed, and that few men in the neighborhood were his equal.

What a delightful Spring that was! My first in the bush. Nature was delirious, and she made me as intoxicated as herself. For a whole month I did nothing but roam the woods, listening to the birds and watching their migrations

and habits. All the creeping things attended me. All that could hop or skip took part in my daily progress from one nook to another. At times I sang, and often prayed. Many times in the course of the day did I uncover my head and remain silent for a time. God seemed everywhere; and surely where I stood, for I felt his presence and also his Spirit.

The Professor left me a few books and told me that Mr. Wilson would lend me more upon application. As I have said, I was too happy to read or think and spent most of the day roaming around. When night came, I was far too sleepy to read, and so called Romper in and went to bed.

About the end of June a gentleman called. The gentleman was no other than Mr. Milton Campbell. He did not stay long. He seemed restless and diffident and so ill at ease that I was glad to see him go. Mr. Campbell told me that he knew Professor Schmidt and that he had promised to find me and try to be friendly. Poor fellow, he needed more than a friend, and yet I could not tell what he needed most. Since then I have seen many like him. Drink and drugs are deadly enemies. Once a man falls under their spell his case seems hopeless.

Religion, no doubt, has saved some; the different "cures" some more, but alas, how many perish hopelessly.

CHAPTER XX.

The summer passed quite uneventful, and my life was as placid as a stream. Reading, shooting, and fishing occupied my time by day. The night passed in slumber and occasional dreams. Some very pleasing, others not so. Never once did my conscience accuse me of wasting time. And seldom did I give much thought to affairs of the outside world. Even my reading did not provoke thought or violent emotion as formerly. Nature's charm and spell was so complete that I lived in elysian, or some other mild ecstatic state. Surely no man at the age of thirty-four ever enjoyed greater repose. At that age all men are active and making their way in the world, or supposed to be. Those who are not, are considered idlers or loafers. And what was I?

In making an estimate of the worth of a man's life and his contribution to the social state, the whole world of his existence must be taken into account. From my boyhood until my thirtieth year, few men paid stricter attention to business than I did. Then for ten years

I lapsed into a state I cannot describe in any better way than I have done by writing these pages. A little before I arrived at my fortieth birthday, I returned to business with greater ardour than ever. For twenty years now I have taken my place amongst men, taking and giving the hardest knocks. My taking pen in hand does not mean that I am about to retire from the activities of life; far from it, but rather a determination to reach out into larger space and usefulness. I have no ambition to succeed as a writer. Money is quite out of the question, for I have made enough to meet my needs, and the needs of others dependent upon me. And whilst I cannot explain the cause of my strange conduct, during the period of my delinquency, I think the facts and experiences worth placing upon record. Some, indeed many, if I am not mistaken, will find in this little plain and straightforward statement of my case, food for thought, and also some encouragement. What I am to-day, I owe, under God, to a good woman and a few friends. Thankfulness and gratitude prompts to this pleasing self-imposed task.

CHAPTER XXI.

Snyder, who lived across the river, appeared suddenly one day. One of his children had wandered away the day before and had not returned. He was in great trouble of course. I could not console him, because I had not seen the child. But I did all I could to make the search successful.

The first thing done was to call Romper and search the bush on our side of the river. In the course of our adventure, we called at the house just erected by Mr. Campbell. Milton was outside, and I explained matters to him. As I was doing so, a lady came to the door, and I was introduced to Miss Campbell by her brother. Both Milton and his sister joined Snyder and myself, and we searched in every direction until nightfall. Darkness prevented our search further, but at early daylight all were out again. On the other side of the river we met some who, like ourselves, were searching for the missing child. All day long we walked, climbed and shouted. By night I was worn out, but did my best not to show it. Mil-

ton had already given up. The only person of our party able to go on, was Miss Campbell. That a woman should show greater prowess of endurance than either of us men, was quite distasteful to me. And what a novel experience! For two hours or more I was thrown by circumstances into the company of a woman, wandering here and there and everywhere, and at times shouting each other's names. There was a time when I would have kicked, or if submitting, would have done so with ill-concealed grace. Every once in a while, we returned to either of our houses. About dusk two of Snyder's boys, excited and breathless, informed us that the child had been found, and was but little the worse for being out all night.

Wishing Milton and his sister good evening, I went home, and once there, fell asleep and slept until noon the next day.

The events of the past few days kept possession of my mind and heart. For the parent's sake I was glad that the child had been found, and was none the worse for having strayed. But it is quite safe to say that the one thing that mastered me was the quality displayed by Miss Campbell. The more I thought of her temper and endurance, softened by her evident sym-

pathy, the more clearly I saw that she was, to my mind, unusual. Brave as well as kind, she must be, I said to myself, or she would not come out so far into the bush and nurse her unfortunate brother. I was not in the mood for noticing her looks. Whether she was good-looking or not, I could not tell; but her voice was beautiful in its lower conversational tones. Speaking to her brother with kind familiarity, made others quite aware of her sweetness and power. One thing besides, I could not help noticing, and that was that Milton obeyed her implicitly. He was risky and once fell quite a distance. After that she watched him carefully. As he was crossing the river on a fallen tree which did not reach all the way across, she called: "Milton, please stop!" Milton stopped short.

"Wouldn't it be more sensible to cross where you did before? Much safer, don't you think?"

"Sis, I think I had better," said he, as he retraced his steps.

"Thank you, Milton," she said sweetly.

As I have observed, I did not know, and did not care how Miss Campbell looked, but the music of her "Thank you, Milton," sounded in my ears for more than a week.

A few days afterwards Milton Campbell paid me another visit. Like myself, he was a good smoker, so that made us equals in one respect. And a good thing it was that we could both smoke so well, and so long, because we were not good talkers. We were little better than strangers, and I was cautious. What the Professor had told the Campbells about me I did not know, and was a trifle too angry to care. Milton was shy, and seemed so melancholy that nothing I said could arouse him. Neither of us asked questions one about the other. Not caring to do so, we were compelled to talk about our friend Professor Rudolph Schmidt. More than once since then, I think I have observed that the reason people talk about others is because they do not care to talk about themselves. Milton Campbell became to me a most interesting fellow, later on, second only to Professor Schmidt, but our first attempt at acquaintance was partly a failure.

Rising to go, Milton quietly remarked: "You have chosen a beautiful spot, Mr. Meredith."

"Do you think so?" I asked.

"Indeed I do, and I think you were wise to build near the river bank, and under these large trees. Father would not do so, and I think he

made a mistake. However, our house could easily be moved for that matter, and if mother should ever come out here, it will have to be done."

"You are not far from the river, at least the house is not," I said.

"Too far, though! Good day!"

"Good day, Mr. Campbell."

What is wrong with young Campbell I asked myself after he had left. And the answer was: "What is wrong with yourself? Answer that."

CHAPTER XXII.

I was told when I left town, that bears would eat me up. Bear stories were as plentiful as berries. Nothing happened worse than a bear hunt, and that happened occasionally. A bear hunt, so they say, is a process rather than an event. First, someone gets fearful, then finds tracks and depredations; others get fearful, and to show they are not afraid, go hunting for two or three days or perhaps a week. All the time the hunt is on, the hunters hope they might not see a bear. However, there was a bear on our side of the river. Milton Campbell saw him. But poor Milton saw lots of things in broad daylight, snakes, geese, rats, yes, and bears. Granny Snyder, she saw things, too; she saw angels and shining saints, and twice in her long life she saw the devil. Too much spirit was the cause of vision in both cases. It was whilst on a three days' bear hunt that I first heard of Granny Snyder. Milton started the hunt, and when we had nearly had enough of the farce, and Snyder and I were off from Milton and two stragglers, he told me of his mother's

"seeing things." Of all that happened, one thing has never been forgotten, and that was the reception we got when we arrived home. Worse luck for us; both Mr. Campbell and Professor Schmidt had arrived during our absence.

"Bear meat for supper, Julia?" said her father, with a twinkle of his eye.

"Yes, pa, and will you please ask Milton to cut nice steaks?"

Milton heard all, but said nothing.

"Campbell," said the Professor, "you like bear-meat, I am sure."

"Yes, sir; we are going to have some for supper. Won't you stay?"

"Of course the Professor will stay. Milton doesn't kill a bear every day—"

She did not finish, for Milton's good nature broke out, and he chased his sister out of the room, and out of the kitchen into the open.

When Milton came in, the Professor offered him some tobacco, saying he had a whole pound he would like to trade for bear-meat.

"Come out here, Professor, and I will settle with you," said Milton with a laugh. Out they went. Sitting on a log outside, the old man and the young one talked and smoked. I, who

sat in the doorway, could see how brotherly they were. Then I saw, and that at a glance, that Milton Campbell was good company and a good talker.

When the Professor and Milton came in, I arose to go.

"Tut," cried Mr. Campbell, "you must stay to supper. If we haven't bear-meat, we have plenty of other good things, and you must stay." I refused, and seeing me about to leave, Mr. Campbell stepped into the doorway and waved me off.

"Tut, tut! man, you can't go!"

"John Meredith," whispered the Professor, "stay a while. I want you to stay."

I was determined to go, but didn't. I said I was going, but that Professor Schmidt could stay, and yet I sat down.

The supper that followed was the best I had eaten for many a day, slow and shy as I was. Scotch hospitality is as genuine a thing as can be got when you get it. Not every one is asked to stay, but those who hear the "tut, tut," of a Scotchman seldom regret it.

The Scotch are fine people.

"Some of them, John," said Mr. Campbell to me later. And there's no doubt in my mind

that the Scotch-Canadians take rank amongst our many nationalities. I didn't like the Germans until I became acquainted with Professor Schmidt. The Scotch I didn't know until I sat for the first time at Mr. Colin Campbell's table. I have seen Germans in Germany, English in England, and Scotch in Scotland. I have seen all three in Canada, and on Canadian soil, and think them much improved. Canada has done, and is doing, a deal for us all, and the sooner we own it the better. From ocean to ocean, forces are at work that will make a people the equal, perhaps the superior, of any the old world has seen. And far be the time when we as a people forget the honest men and good who left other shores for the last great trek.

The meal being over, we began a talk about things in general. Someone remarked that it was going to be a bad night. Hearing the remark, I asked for permission to go home. When I arose to go, the Professor arose too, and after saying "Good night," we left together.

There was no road, or even a path between the houses, so it was with great difficulty that we arrived at home.

I noticed that evening that Professor Schmidt was unusually quiet. For a long time he smoked

slowly and thoughtfully. He of all men I ever knew could smoke with deliberation. Now, Father McMann is a good smoker and a thinker, but a reckless talker when smoking. He can smoke two pipes to my one easily, and think and talk at the same rate. As I was saying, Professor Schmidt could smoke with deliberation and say nothing. After putting away his pipe, he walked the floor three times, and turning on me, said angrily:

"The devil has got that fellow, I know."

"Who do you mean?"

"Milton Campbell!"

"I hope you are mistaken for once, Professor."

"I hope so, but he won't stay. He tells me he can't do it, and he won't. The devil and hell-fire is in them drugs and whisky. Milton is only twenty-six years of age and worse than dead. Damn it, he will kill the old people and the girl, too."

How Schmidt's eyes flashed fire as he spoke.

"He seems all right. He hasn't tasted either drugs or liquor for three months," I said.

"Only because he can't get them. They made him promise to stay in the bush with Julia."

"And he has kept his promise, for I don't think he has been to town."

"He told me he must go in next week, and is going back with me."

"Miss Campbell seems to have great influence over him, and he obeys her in everything readily."

"Ah! he is full of tricks. He is cunning. He says he is sick and must have medicine."

"No doubt he is sick and needs some attention, and, as you know, he coughs all the time."

"No, he needs no medicine, besides what the Toronto doctor gave them to bring out here with them. The doctors know him. They know his case, and when they advised them to come, they fixed up things for him. Julia has medicine put away, and he can only get so much and he wants more, I think. I may be wrong. Anyhow if he gets off, there will be much trouble."

"Do you think he will go?" I asked.

"He said he was going out with me, and I won't let him go."

"How will you prevent him?"

"I will go out by night. Isn't it moonlight next week?"

"I think so. But can't you go early in the morning?"

"He will watch."

"Not he, he won't be awake!"

"Awake! Man, he never sleeps. He hasn't slept naturally for a long time."

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Professor left quietly, Milton Campbell remained, and I forgot much of what the Professor had said. A few days after his leaving Milton paid me another visit.

"Mr. Meredith," said he, "are you going to Beecher's Point this week?"

"I intend going before long, Mr. Campbell."

"Well, I wish you would send by the stage and get me some few things from town. Seeing that there is no drug store at Beecher's, you will have to send by the stage driver to Riggsville."

"I am afraid I could not oblige you, because the stage only runs twice a week, and I go one day and back the next."

"Didn't I hear you say, Mr. Meredith, that you would have to go to town before winter set in? By town I thought you meant Riggsville."

"Did I say so?"

"Yes, both to father and the Professor. I am sorry to trouble you, but the fact is, I am

sick and must get some medicine. I do not like to leave my sister alone, or I would go myself at once. I will write out the prescription, and you will have no trouble."

I saw I was caught, for I had told both Mr. Campbell and Professor Schmidt that I intended going to town. To refuse was more than I could do readily, and yet, under no circumstances would I encourage Milton's weakness.

Seeing that I hesitated, he said: "Then I must go, or suffer for the want of medicine; but I will go."

Not knowing what to say, and dreading the thought of his leaving, I promised to see in a day or two whether or not I would go to town. I could tell that Milton was either suffering or excited, and I said:

"Mr. Campbell, I have some kinds of medicine that was put up for me, in case I should need it."

"Have you?" said he eagerly, "let me see."

I went in to get the small case, and after unlocking, handed it to him.

Reading and muttering Latin words, occupied him for a moment. Then suddenly he picked up a chip and dipping it into a small bottle, he took a dose of the powder.

I said: "You did not read the instructions, you might easily take an overdose and do yourself an injury."

"Oh, I know these things all at sight. You don't know that I am a doctor. Thank you, Mr. Meredith; and do you mind if I take this small bottle home? I will replace it as soon as I can get it refilled."

Again I hesitated, and Milton took advantage of me by placing the bottle in his pocket.

The effect of the drug was almost immediate. It transformed the whole man. I am sorry that I cannot describe its action, or rather its effect. For the next hour I listened to a most intelligent, indeed brilliant man, talk about everything connected with himself and his past. He told me of his school days, his college studies and his pranks; of the professors and doctors, and of Society in Toronto and throughout the province; politics, religion, everything current he discussed in a masterly manner. I have had one or two surprises in my life, but I must confess that of all things, the transformation of Milton Campbell comes easily first. Then as suddenly as he became brilliant, he became stupid, talked nonsense, or said nothing. Seeing the change so marked, I became alarmed.

And as if to add to my alarmed state of mind, he took from his pocket the small bottle and proceeded to take another dose. What prompted me I do not know, but I seized the bottle and threw it clear over the tree-tops into the river. So stupid had he become that he only smiled and started to go home.

Not caring to let Milton go alone, I went with him. It was well that I did, for he needed assistance. When we came to the clearing, we met Miss Campbell.

"Milton, where have you been? You shouldn't leave me alone so long."

"Good afternoon, Mr. Meredith. Has Milton been paying you a visit?"

I said something in reply, and wished both good afternoon.

All the way back my thoughts were so conflicting. I had heard of men who took drugs, opium in its many forms and substitutes, but I never dared to think that the action was so drastic. What was the name of the powder in the small bottle, I did not know. Why did I throw it away? I would search for it on the morrow. And this man, Milton Campbell, was a wonder. Equal to anything I thought. Yes,

he was equal to anything, when under the influence of opium or some other drug. Without it he was not good for much. Coughing, smoking, a little hunting, was his daily occupation, but given, or taking a dose of some drug, he suddenly became brilliant and even heroic. A week later, the next time he came to see me, he made his defence. I call it his defence, for it certainly was no apology.

In a half stammering conversation, he told me how he came to use opium and its many substitutes. No man, he said, could do his best at anything without being acted upon by some sympathetic agent in the form of drug or liquor. From what he told me, many successful surgical operations were made when the surgeon was at least half under the power of some favorite drug or drink. He seemed to know that the best articles in the newspapers, and the best books were written under some such power acting upon brain and nerve. All the best speeches in parliament, and many of the ablest sermons preached from the pulpits, were due to stimulation. Many times since then have I heard and read of such things being done by drug-eating and liquor-drinking artists. How much truth there is in the statement I do not know

or care. I have known a few who used spirits and drug stimulants and narcotics, but I never knew anyone who could boast of it like Milton Campbell.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Taking advantage of the last fine weather of the season, I went to town. The Indian Summer was beautiful, and Romper and I played the part of dog, and brave.

At Beecher's Point I met Professor Schmidt. He made inquiry about the Campbells, and when I told him that Milton was still in the bush and had never left, he seemed greatly pleased. But when I told him of the dose of powder and its action he was quite hurt.

"Didn't I tell you he was full of tricks?"

"I remember you did."

"Why, that fellow will fool anybody if he gets half a chance. And when you gave him the box he saw his advantage and took it."

Having to visit the bank at Riggsville, I took the stage with Professor Schmidt and two ladies as fellow passengers.

One of the ladies was the wife of Dr. Jones. Mrs. Jones and the Professor were well acquainted, and did most of the talking. The other lady, like myself, seemed pleased to listen.

I could not help contrasting my last ride on

the stage, and the change of mind that had taken place; or rather, I should say change of character, I suppose. I did not swear once, not even to myself. And I really think that whilst I engaged but little in conversation, I was quite agreeable.

My friend, the Professor, was certainly a man of very fine disposition. Temperament is nearly everything of value in the make-up of a man. A fine temperament is worth more than fine gold. Here was a man the equal of the best, and superior to most men living, taking a kindly interest in the small things of life. By small things I mean the village life and settlement happenings of the season. And to be fair to Mrs. Jones, she was well gifted, too. Musical matters interested her more than the most of women. Judging from her conversation, she was appreciative of the best masters and their work; but when discussing Professor Schmidt's own work, she became quite enthusiastic. I had somehow taken the notion that Rudolph Schmidt was a great man. Mrs. Jones was of the same opinion. In a modest way she gave him to understand that his services were telling upon the life of the community for good; and wished him health and long life. Her tribute

to the worth of the Professor pleased me, and I did my best to show it.

Speaking of some of his pupils the Professor was quite playful and pleasing. The Irish he said were the most musical people in the settlement, and the Germans next. When it was possible to get a pupil of German and Irish extraction a teacher's reputation was easily made.

"Look at that boy Kauffman, his father is German and his mother Irish. Oh, he is a beautiful boy. Did you ever hear him play the violin or piano, Mrs. Jones?" he asked.

"No, Professor, I have not. Is he very promising?"

"Oh, but he is beautiful. You should hear him play 'Beethoven.' "

" 'Beethoven,' Professor! I did not think there was anyone besides yourself that played the masters in all the country round. Surely you are fortunate in having such a pupil; and are his parents sympathetic?"

"Yes, the parents like the boy to play, but they want him to play for the neighbors, sometimes all night. The neighbors want to dance and jig, and he wants to play 'Beethoven' and the masters. The other night the neighbors

came to get him to play for a dance, and they could not find Victor. They thought he was lost. Only his mother knew where he was, and she knew he was hiding in the cellar."

"And his mother is Irish!"

"Real Irish, Mrs. Jones."

"Well, what next?"

The stage arrived at Riggsville on time and without mishap. Professor Schmidt kept a room at one of the hotels, so I went with him and was made comfortable.

Whilst in town I attended strictly to business, and kept as close as possible. Some people I had known formerly, were on the street, but I escaped any renewal of acquaintance.

After giving me all needed advice, the Professor and I parted at the hotel from which the stage left. Both Mrs. Jones and the other lady returned by stage; also two commercial travellers who occupied themselves and us, by telling stories and talking business.

CHAPTER XXV.

For a month or so after my return from town I saw but little of Milton Campbell. Most of my time was taken up in housekeeping and getting ready for the long winter. The supplies I had ordered had arrived, and I had placed them for use and preservation. Then I had bought a number of books I wanted to read, and so was kept quite busy, and felt quite happy.

The tenth of November was a cold day followed by a still colder night. I had taken supper, and, after putting away the dishes, had settled down to smoke and read, when I was startled by a knock on the door. Upon opening, I saw a woman standing outside. For a moment I was so taken back that I could not answer the question asked. Recovering myself I answered:

"No. Miss Campbell, your brother is not here."

"Milton not here, Mr. Meredith? Well, wherever can he be? He has been out for two hours or more. I was uneasy, but think-

ing that he was with you, I went on working and waiting until supper time."

"I am very sorry, Miss Campbell, but I assure you that your brother has not been here at all."

"Oh, Milton! Milton!" she cried, wringing her hands; "where are you? You will die out in the cold to-night!"

Then turning away, she passed out of sight in the darkness.

For a moment or so I paused, at war with myself, and then followed her hurriedly.

"Miss Campbell," I shouted, "please go into my house, and I will find Milton for you. You wait there until we return. I will find him. I know I can find him. I will search all night." No reply was made to my entreaties, but as I followed the advancing form of the woman, I could hear sobs and prayers and bitter cries of pain, which nearly drove me mad. In her eagerness she ran, calling, "Milton! Milton!" The only answer was the mocking of the cold night-wind cruel in its course. As she approached the house she called still louder, "Milton! Milton!"

And I shouted too, "Milton! Milton Campbell, where are you? Where are you?"

The lamp left in the window sent its warmth and light into the clearing, a welcome to the wandering one; but he came not in answer to the pitiful cries that wailed out upon the night. Throwing open the door, the poor stricken sister called tenderly for her brother, feeling that he must surely have returned in her absence.

Not caring to enter uninvited, I stood upon the threshold and waited. How long I waited I do not know; it seemed an age. At length her entreaties and calling ceased, and I grew desperate, so desperate, that after knocking but once and scarcely waiting for a reply, I opened the door and rushed into the house. There upon the floor knelt a woman with uplifted face and clasped hands, praying. Her lips quivered as her petition ascended heavenward. Uncovering my head, I stood for the moment, and when utterance failed, I knelt beside her and begged of her to remain indoors whilst she allowed me to go out in search of her brother.

"I cannot stay, sir, I cannot remain! He will die before the morning if I cannot find him," she said.

Feeling and knowing that action must be taken, I buttoned my coat and collar and turned

to go out. Seeing that I was going, Miss Campbell said, "Please let me go with you."

"No, Miss Campbell," I said, "you must not run the risk of losing your way in the bush on such a night as this. I could never sanction your going out of the clearing again until morning. I will go. I am well and strong, and I can find my way because I have hunted and strolled for miles around; and your brother may return, and when he does he will certainly need you. Please allow me to go, and please promise me not to go out of the clearing until I come back."

My argument seemed to be effective, for Miss Campbell sat down and motioned me to do the same.

"Do you think he has gone to Beecher's Point?" she asked.

"I think he has," I replied. "Your brother told Professor Schmidt that he wanted to go to town for medicine. That was when the Professor and your father were here. Once since then he informed me that unless I was going and would bring what he wanted, he would be compelled to go."

Miss Campbell seemed painfully surprised to hear my reasons for thinking that Milton had gone to the village. That she surprised me by

asking if I thought he had gone over to Snyder's.

"To Snyder's?" I said, "does he go there? Does he know those people?"

"I think, Mr. Meredith, that he has been there twice, and I know that the Snyder boys were here two days ago."

"Then he is at Snyder's," I said, "they will keep him to-night, and he will come home in the morning."

My words were not assuring.

"Do you think he would stay all night without sending me word?" she asked.

What answer to make I did not know. Rising I said: "If you will promise to stay here, I will go over to Snyder's and see. If he is not there I will get assistance and go to town, or rather to Beecher's Point."

"No, Mr. Meredith, I will not allow you to go. You, any man, could go astray and freeze to death a night like this. You are kind, but we have no right to ask for such service at such risk and possible cost. I could never permit such a thing. My father would not approve of my action."

With these words she passed by me, making for the door. Seeing her intention maddened

me. Laying my hand upon her arm, I held her. My action startled her and I think displeased her greatly.

"Mr. Meredith," she said with firmness, "I am mistress here. You will please let me go. I am very thankful to you for what you have done. You can do no more. I feel sure that Milton is at Snyder's or has gone to town, and I will follow and find him."

I was pleased at her behavior and determination. Her firmness only made me firmer.

"Miss Campbell, I am a man and a gentleman. I know my place. I admit that you are mistress here. If you are determined to go, you may go. I will go too. I will go my own way and that at once. If you and your brother perish this night, I am guiltless and blameless. Were I to remain, I should despise myself and my life from this hour would be vile in my own eyes. I would rather die aiding the search, and that before morning, than live a craven coward for many years to come. Let me tell you that you are not acting wisely. I can go to Snyder's more quickly than you. You do not know the way; you were never there, and there is no road other than the river and the river bank. Your brother may return before long, and

needing you, or seeking you, suffer tenfold. Again I say, you are brave and devoted, but you are not wise."

Taking my hand in hers, she said: "Go, Mr. Meredith, and may my father's God be with you. Bring my poor brother back to me. Whilst you are gone I will remain, going only out in the clearing and on paths known to me."

What happened by the way I do not know. How many times I stumbled and fell, I know not, but I arrived at Snyder's house. The family of the sturdy Dutchman were badly frightened both by my manner and appearance. They soon informed me that Mr. Campbell had not paid them a visit. They informed me, however, that the boys had carried a parcel from Beecher's Point and had delivered it to Milton himself. The oldest boy, on being awakened and questioned, said that the contents of the parcel were not what had been ordered, and that Mr. Campbell said he would go to town himself next day.

Then he had gone to Beecher's Point, that much was clear. But why did he not leave earlier.

Mr. Snyder asked if I was going to the village, or back to tell Miss Campbell at once.

To return to the house would be a waste of time and strength. I was spent and bruised and bleeding, they said, and ought to rest until morning. I said that I could not stay, that as it was much nearer to Beecher's Point from their house than Mr. Campbell's, I would go on if Mr. Snyder would go over and tell Miss Campbell that her brother had gone to town and was, I thought, quite safe. To this, my plan, they agreed, until wise old Granny Snyder suggested that Peter (Mr. Snyder) should go with me, and that the two biggest boys go over and stay with Miss Campbell.

I was glad of the company of Snyder, but objected to letting the two boys go out on such a cold, dark night.

Finding that I could not prevent them from going out on search, I accepted of Mr. Snyder's assistance and we started for Beecher's Point.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The distance from Snyder's to the village was nine miles over a bad road, or no road most of the way. Some snow had fallen, but the ground was quite hard and the river frozen, so we managed to reach the village by an hour after midnight.

There were lights burning in the hotel when we arrived, and so we stopped there first and made inquiries. No one had seen anything of the missing man. In fact no one there knew him. Baxter, the hotel-keeper, remembered that two or three days before he had taken an order in writing from one of the Snyder boys. The order called for a bottle of whisky. He noticed that the order also called for a bottle of patent medicine which could only be purchased from Finley, the store-keeper.

Both Snyder and myself agreed that Campbell had paid the boys and sent them in for whisky, and a bottled drug; and that he was lying drunk somewhere near home. Then there was no time to lose, or the man would freeze

to death. Half dead as we were, we felt bound to return at once. Leaving word for Dr. Jones that he and Baxter and others should follow as soon as possible, we retraced our steps. How we felt and what we said as we stumbled on through cold and darkness, need not be told.

We reached Campbell's about daybreak. Romper announced our return. One of Snyder's boys ran to meet us, saying that they had found Mr. Campbell, and that he was asleep in the house. At the door we met Miss Campbell, whose tearful eyes, but thankful utterance, told us all we wanted to know.

Calling the Snyder boys, and taking their father with me, we went on to my house for food and rest. As we went, young Peter said that on their way to Mr. Campbell's they had called at my place, and seeing a light burning, and hearing someone cough badly, they had looked through the window, and there sure enough, was the missing man sound asleep in my chair. Of course it was clear enough, that soon after I had left, he must have called and settled himself snugly. Once in the house the evidence of the truth of our conclusions was seen, for on the table lay an empty whisky bottle and my medicine case. So the doctor had returned to

get the bottle, out of which he had taken a dose a month before. The drug he wanted most was not there, but no doubt he found something that gave him satisfaction.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The worst thing Snyder and I did that night was that of ordering Dr. Jones and Baxter to follow us out to Campbell's house. Long before they arrived the missing man was safe and sound. Upon their arrival, they took possession. Baxter's profanity and Jones' sanctity amused me greatly. Even Snyder kept awake during the ordeal of listening to their reflections and advice. As for Milton, he was too dull and spiritless to listen to a word or a single oath. But my heart ached for poor Miss Campbell, and how I wished we had left the doctor and the hotel-keeper stay in the village. After eating nearly all in sight, the two worthies started for home. The only satisfaction I obtained was that of seeing saint and sinner compelled to keep each other company for so long.

Milton Campbell stayed indoors and submitted to his sister's nursing. I, on the other hand, went my usual round of living for a week or more, quite unmolested.

More than once I half made up my mind to go and see my neighbors, and ask if I could be

of any use. The occurrence of the past week had certainly broken down my masterly spirit of reserve. Now I clearly saw that my period, or life of exclusiveness, was at an end. I could take my choice, between seeing people suffer and die and take no thought, or do something to lessen their suffering. I came away from both town and village to live at ease, and without the least interference. I could take care of myself, and I expected others to do the same without any assistance from me. But the knock on my cottage door, and the white face of a woman proclaimed war in my breast. It only lasted a moment, but it was war. Her cry, "Milton! Milton! You will die if I cannot find you to-night," was the test of my manhood. Had I turned indoors, and settled down in comfort for the evening, leaving the brother and sister to perish, my theories of living might have been justified; but I would have by my inactivity, proclaimed myself a wretch. More than that, I would have damned my soul. It took a few days to see the truth, and the true state of my heart, and in the direction of my past conduct. On the way to the village I told Snyder it was a fool of a thing to send Miss Campbell and her brother into the bush. At no time could I see

the sense of it, but a week later I clearly saw my duty as a man and a gentleman, and made up my mind what to do as long as they stayed in my neighborhood.

No sooner had I seen my duty and was preparing for action, than I became relieved of all responsibility and anxiety. I was preparing to go and ask Miss Campbell if I could be of any use, when her father came to see me. Mr. Campbell had only consented to his son and daughter staying in the bush during the winter, upon the understanding that he should relieve her as soon as harvesting was done. This, he informed me as soon as he had made a few inquiries as to my health, and also thanked me for having assisted his daughter the night Milton had strayed. Now he had arrived, and intended staying all the winter, having left the home farm in charge of his wife and two younger sons.

No one can tell how pleased I was to see Mr. Campbell, and to know that he intended to stay until spring-time came.

Before leaving, he asked me to visit his house as frequently as I wished, and to extend to him the privilege of visiting me. He said that he had been acquainted with Professor Schmidt for

some years. The Professor had expressed the wish that his friends, Colin Campbell and John Meredith, should become well acquainted, feeling sure that if once acquainted they would become friends.

The winter was cold and long. People living in towns, villages and settlements, complained bitterly. But we who lived in the bush, suffered but little. Sheltered and supplied we spent the days in chopping, hunting, eating, reading, and talking upon many things interesting and profitable. No one was sick a single day. Milton, we could see, struggled hard against his foes. Sometimes he became unmanageable and had to be given soothing liquor and medicine, again he was as peaceable and gentle as a father could wish a son to be. Miss Campbell was to have returned home. At her own request she was allowed to stay, and greatly did she contribute to our comfort and happiness. Dark days were ahead of us, but we knew it not. The bitterness of death, tasted whilst living and smiling, was a thing we became well used to in a year or so. Fate or Providence, I know not which, gave us a sweet respite that we might grow strong to bear and strive well, when the time came. I retract: not Fate, but a kind Providence watch-

ed over us and prepared us for life and duty, as reasonable beings to whose care each other had been committed. So well did we learn the lesson, that for many years past, some of us have lived happy together.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

My visit to the log-house in the clearing became frequent after the return of Mr. Campbell and his giving me an invitation. We generally talked upon religious subjects. I soon discovered that Mr. Campbell was orthodox, and that I, well, I was heterodox, or something not quite as good. Our arguments were lengthy and occasionally warm. Milton listened attentively, and sometimes helped me out. Miss Campbell worked and listened, and sometimes paused and smiled as we grew warmer or raised our voices higher than usual.

By arguing with Mr. Campbell I learned much about Professor Schmidt and his religious views. Sometimes my opponent would say: "You and the Professor agree upon that point."

Once he said: "Professor Schmidt is not a Christian, he is a Deist."

I said I had never heard our friend say what were his religious views. Mr. Campbell replied that whatever they were he was a good man and

perfectly candid and outspoken, without being violent and abusive.

Some time during the Winter I discovered that my visits to Mr. Campbell's were quite frequent, and that I stayed as long as expected. Perhaps the real discovery was that I was beginning to admire Miss Campbell. Indeed, I was shocked at myself. Shocked to think that any woman in the whole world was worth a thought from me. Rather than encourage myself to think even respectfully of any woman, I would turn monk. It never occurred to me then that possibly monks were respectful to women, and that many a fellow wearing a cowl was a lover and a worldling in disguise. It was Miss Campbell's voice that first pleased me so much. For a long time after I was introduced by her brother I could not tell what her face was like. Now that state of indifference was past, and I could declare positively, if necessary, that she was a very beautiful woman. Before the Springtime came I had seen her in my dreams more than once, and twice shaken hands with her. The day her father left for home we all went to Beecher's Point together. Some of the distance I walked beside Miss Campbell and conversed with her alone. On the way back I so far forgot

myself as to call her Julia. For such a rash and thoughtless utterance I apologized, and later called myself a fool, both for using her name and making the apology.

When spring opened, Milton and I began to work a little. We both agreed that our past idleness was disgraceful. Together we cleared a piece of land and planted potatoes and garden seeds, and Miss Campbell made a flower-bed under the front window of the house.

Spring and summer came with all nature's wealth of sunshine and warmth. I was the happiest man alive. And why? Well, I did not know. All I knew was, that the days were far too short for work, and conversation with Milton and his sister. Every other week I went to Beecher's for groceries, for mail, and for books borrowed or returned. I wanted to be considered a settler, and began to talk like a man having an interest in the settlement. In fact my social delinquency was a thing of the past.

My personal appearance was woefully neglected for some years. Milton Campbell, like myself, was rather inclined to be untidy. Our clothes were well worn, and none too fashionable. Miss Campbell called her brother's attention to the fact that even on Sundays he wore

his week-day clothes. Milton, being fond of his sister, and willing to be obedient, dressed for church on the next Sunday. I presented myself as usual in my seedy garments, and had to laugh at the contrast between Milton and myself. Of course I made excuse by saying that we were too far away from town to take pleasure in wearing good clothes. Miss Campbell gave me a look that rebuked me. She said her father was of the opinion that her friends, Professor Schmidt and Mr. Meredith, were two fine looking men, the finest he knew, but that neither of them cared much for dress. Whether to take this as a compliment or a hint to improve I did not know. However, the next Sunday being a beautiful day, I took from my trunk a new suit and tie as well as some clean linen, and looked them over with a view to toning up. Long did I debate the matter of wearing the new or the old. Having accepted Miss Campbell's invitation to dinner, I concluded to dress up for once at least. To do so in honor of the lady or myself, was the question. Not knowing whether the lady cared a straw about the matter of my personal appearance or not, I concluded to dress for my own sake. When I appeared at her house and saw that she was

greatly and agreeably surprised, I felt a thrill quite uncommon to me. That afternoon we went for a walk, all three. How far we went, I do not know; I never did, for I nearly lost my head in a mild delirium of happiness. Milton for some reason or other chose to play with Romper and chase squirrels. I don't know whether I appreciated his action or not, but if I remember rightly, it was that very Sunday evening that I gave him my best pipe as a keepsake.

The whole summer long I lived happily as the birds, and quite possibly with as little forethought. What a contrast to my past life and circumstances. The wine of life was sweet as ever it had tasted to me; yes, and sweeter by far. How I abused myself for all my churlishness and ill-nature. For what reason had I forgotten God and cursed man? How thankful I felt that it was all over, and that I was only thirty-six years of age. In future I would play the man. I vowed I would ask no favors of anyone, and yet succeed in any undertaking which I might later choose.

When Professor Schmidt paid us his next visit, he was not long or slow in noticing my changed appearance and manner. His smiles

and chuckle was quite significant. What he said to Miss Campbell that afternoon, I do not know even yet. The lady has since confessed that though he tried to laugh he was serious enough and said:

"Be careful, Julia! For God's sake, be careful, won't you?"

The Professor stayed a whole week, and what a time we had. As though all things were favorable to my altered condition, the musician brought his violin. No sooner had we taken supper (we were both at Mr. Campbell's) than he began to tune up and asked what we would have.

"Anything," said Milton.

"That means everything, I think," shouted the Professor.

What came over me I cannot tell, but I felt so strangely happy that I had to go outside and stay out until I could control my feelings. Through the open door I could hear the sweetest music I had ever heard. Music had never before given me much pleasure, and as for the violin,—the instrument was quite accursed. What was the nature of the change I had lately undergone, a change so marked and surprising, is far beyond my comprehension. But as a fact,

attested to by more than twenty years' experience, I am passionately fond of music and nearly all musical instruments, particularly the violin. As I have already written, I consider myself something of a psychic wonder or miracle to myself. For years I had read for the purpose mainly of self-study. Yet I have never been able to account for my love of music, seeing that for the first half of my life I cared so little about musical sounds. Music that pleased others, irritated me, and generally resulted in fits of ill-feeling and displays of bad temper.

"What's the matter, John?" asked Professor Schmidt, as he came to my side out of doors.

"I don't know, Professor," I said.

"Are you sick?" he asked again.

"No," I replied, "but when you began to play I felt so very queer for a time, but I am all right now. Play on, if you please."

"Ah, I understand you, John, and I will play for you many times yet, but not to-night."

And saying so he sat down beside me on a log in the clearing.

"How much longer are you going to stay in the bush?"

"All my life, Professor," I said.

"Oh, no, not all your life, John. In another

ten or fifteen years there will be no bush. People are coming fast. I see some are clearing this side of the village. As I told you once, you will find settlers everywhere now. The Government is going to encourage immigration from all the old countries. Mennonites are coming. Russians,—and the rest. If you stay in Ontario, you will have close neighbors; and if you go out to the Northwest, you will see lots of people."

"What you say, Professor, is true. I have no doubt; then I will have to stay here and farm."

"No, John Meredith, it is not good for you to farm. Come back to town with me and take back your old business, and you will be happy and do well.

"Impossible!"

"Quite possible, John. You are well, and strong as any man, and you must come. You must not shut yourself up in this bush. Every man must mix with other men and women, like a man. Damn the monk business! These are not the Middle Ages. I like a fellow who can take a kick and give a good kick back. Come to town and show the fellows that you are a match for them all."

The manliness and vigor of the Professor's utterance struck a responsive chord, and I said, "Give me one year to think over it."

"Good, John! Good! One year you shall have, and I know you will come."

CHAPTER XXIX.

My second summer in the bush was, as I have already written, a state of blessedness. Nothing in all the world troubled me in the least.

The last Sunday in August I remember so well the day. I dressed in my best, and, as usual, went to see the Campbells. Miss Campbell was very kind, and I grew bold enough to talk about things in general, and Professor Schmidt in particular.

"When we get home, I am going to take up my musical studies again," she said.

Trying to master myself, I asked when she expected to go.

"Before long, Mr. Meredith; as soon as Milton is ready."

"And Milton is going too?"

"Yes, he thinks he is quite well now, and wants to return to town, and perhaps to Toronto."

There I sat for a moment or so, like someone smitten with a half horror.

Miss Campbell must have noticed my change of tone as I said:

"And so I am to be alone again?"

"How long have you lived out here?" she asked.

"About a year before your father began to clear this land."

"Only a year? Why, I thought you must have lived here a long time. Do you ever go to town, Mr. Meredith?"

"Not very often, Miss Campbell."

"Well, when you do please come and see father and Milton, will you?"

"I am afraid I cannot make any promise."

"Here, Milton! Come here! I have asked Mr. Meredith to come and see us when we return to town; you make him promise, won't you, Milton?"

"Oh," said her brother with a half pout, "I can't make Mr. Meredith promise anything, but I hope he will come and see us. Won't you come, John?"

I told them that I seldom went to Riggsville or anywhere out of the bush, that I had no friends to visit, and that if I ever went out, I would get back as soon as my little business was attended to.

The conversation turned upon some other topic with much less interest than usually. Miss

Campbell could plainly see how I had received the information she had given me. I, too, could see that she pitied me; her voice was so low and sweet. As I was leaving, she gave me her hand. I did not dare look into her face, so shook hands and passed out.

All the way home, and all that evening, and far into the night, I sat in a sorrowful mood. All my thoughts of life and things seemed dreary. I go to town? No indeed, I would stay at home. All the happiness and peace of mind I had known for a long time had come to me in the bush, and here I would stay.

The next morning I arose early, and went down to the pool in the river. The cold plunge sent my blood tingling through my body. As I stood upon the stone, I laughed and laughed again at my folly.

"This is the life for me," I said; "God made the country and the devil made the town. The country for me!" and in again I plunged. As I swam around the pool, kissed here and there by the sunshine through the branches, I tasted the nectar of bliss with all its sweetness. Health is a wonderful thing. A healthy man can throw off a good many things an unhealthy man must submit to. All the time I was in the pool

Romper on the bank barked at me and wagged his tail. In sheer wantonness of mischief I chased the dog. It took me some time to catch him, but when I had done so, I threw him into the pool. Down he went out of sight for the moment. Oh, the spluttering and splashing, and how we enjoyed the hour!

Before the day was half over old Melancholy got hold of me again. So tight did he grip me that I found an excuse for seeing Milton Campbell. When I got to the door I was as pleased as could be to find that he was out, and that his sister was seated sewing. Miss Campbell asked me in and gave me a seat. As I sat opposite her my opinion was confirmed, that she was the most beautiful woman I knew, or had ever known. Her natural charm of manner and person was so pleasing that I became entranced. Nothing was said of her return to town. For nearly an hour we talked of books, flowers and music, yes, and friendship a little. That afternoon, for the first time in my life, I became aware that a woman could converse intelligently and sweetly on almost any subject. Miss Campbell could think as well as speak. I am far from saying that she was the only one amongst so many women who could think and converse

upon many subjects, but I am compelled to say that she was the first lady to impress me with the fact. The few ladies I had met and become acquainted with, were domestic, but shallow enough to talk nonsense most of the time. What a treat it was to talk with a woman who seemed to know almost as much about books and music as the Professor. Her father was a graduate of a noted Scotch university, and her mother a professor's daughter. Canada had been their home for many years, but the new country made them as fragrant as the heather.

Milton came in and seemed surprised to see me. He was quite good-natured, and so I spent another hour very pleasantly.

When I started for home with Romper following at my heels, I was as happy as a king.

"What power," I said, "has been given to woman. Little do they know their own power for good or evil; and what a paradise must be life and home where a woman of such intelligence and devotion becomes the wife and companion of a man able to appreciate her worth."

Then all at once a cloud crossed my blue sky, and I sighed: "She is going away, going home." On the evening before I said I would not go to town, no not I. Recalling the fact

that I had been given an invitation, and that by Miss Campbell herself, to call and see her father I changed my mind and said:

"Yes, I will go to town, I will go anywhere in the wide world if she asks me to go."

I have already remarked that a woman has been given a great power. I should have said, over man. What follows is perfectly true, and a proof, if proof is necessary, of one woman's power. Rather a little more than six years had passed from the time I had damned most men and all women. But I was a fool and a fanatic, granted as true, and may a merciful God forgive me if I was accountable. Here was a woman, who without effort and without knowledge of the circumstances, who made herself appear to me as beauty and devotion realized actually.

"John Meredith," I asked, "you who vowed to hate all women, are you in love again? Is it true?" "Yes," said my better self, "it is true." "Does the woman love you?" "I cannot tell," I answered, "she has not told me." "What are you going to do, John Meredith?" And John Meredith with uncovered head, answered: "All foolish vows are broken, but the vow I now make, shall never be broken. I, John Meredith, love thee, Julia Campbell, and will

love thee in life, in death, for evermore, and may God so help me.'' All this looks like a man playing minister, and marrying a woman to himself in her absence and without her consent. No! There was no thought of matrimony in my mind. I was too heavily weighed down by a sense of my own unworthiness, and the folly of my past, to entertain for a moment the thought or hope that the woman I loved, would ever be mine. I loved her and I knew it. It was good to love. Hate had so long and fearfully reigned in my heart that at times I was positively hateful even to myself. ''Hate is hell,'' and I knew that. ''Love is heaven,'' and that I was beginning to know.

For several months, a part of each day of my life was spent in the company of a beautiful, accomplished and religious woman. The effect of such a life on mine during that period was a complete change of state. I do not say of character. Characters are not changed in six or twelve months. It was a change of heart, and consequently of state, of ideas, and intention. I supposed myself to have loved once before. Now I found that I was only dreaming then. The older a man may be when the one love of his life has awakened him, the more wonderful

love is. Boys, (all men are boys under thirty) dream, men love. And woe to the man who loves, if his love is not a sacred flame.

CHAPTER XXX.

The hunting season came round, and we had callers, or rather passers. Some of the parties were known to Milton, and I fear were there by the fullest of intention. When they had passed we were in trouble again.

For more than two weeks the hunting party camped on the river about half a mile below Mr. Campbell's house. Milton spent most of his time hunting, or in the camp. At his sister's request, I went in search of him and asked him to come home. I could see that all were half drunk, and Milton Campbell rather more than the rest. He came home the next day, and looked and behaved as usual. On Thursday of the second week, there was much drinking and a deal of excitement. Their fooling only ceased when one of their number got badly wounded, through the careless use of a shot-gun. The sight of the wounded man sobered them, and also caused them to break up camp sooner than they had intended. Miss Campbell asked me the second time to go and see if Milton would

soon be home. When I arrived all I found was a man either drunk or half dead. Milton was perfectly helpless, and I had to carry him home upon my back. For a day and a night he had lain on the ground in the bush, and was wet and half frozen. Thinking that he would revive after warmth and care, and not wishing his sister to see him as he was, I took him to my house instead of his own. I kept Milton there, and did my best for some hours, to restore him to feeling, but meeting with so little success, I very reluctantly carried him home.

The surprise and grief of Miss Campbell when she saw me enter the house with her brother in my arms, was painful to me. I greatly feared the shock would be serious. Kneeling by his side she called him by name so tenderly. Placing her cheek against her brother's she remained kneeling for some moments. The closed eyes and quivering lips told me that heaven heard her cry for help. Yet upon her knees she looked up:—

"Mr. Meredith, we must go home at once. You will help us, won't you? Yes, you will come with us, and stay until Milton is better. It is no use staying here. We came out into the wilderness to escape temptation and danger, but

you see there is temptation and danger here as everywhere else."

I said, "Yes, we will go as soon as your brother is able. Please let me take him to his room and place him in bed; then we must try to restore him to warmth and feeling."

So saying, I lifted up Milton's body into my arms and carried him to his bedroom. It was my opinion that the wisest thing would be to send for the doctor. Miss Campbell agreed with me, and I prepared to go over to Snyder's or to the village as soon as possible.

Before I got away, the warmth and stimulant given, began to take effect. It was well that I had not left, for Milton became quite violent, and, worse than all, vulgar and abusive. The gentleman, and Milton Campbell was a gentleman when sober, became a sot. Seeing that such a display of low-life conduct and language was heart-breaking to his sister, I asked her to go to my house for the medicine chest. She begged to be allowed to go for the doctor. Whilst struggling with the furious Milton, I managed to reason with Miss Campbell against her going to Beecher's Point.

"Miss Campbell," I said, "if you will bring me the small chest and the key, I think I can

give your brother something that will quiet him, and cause him to sleep until the doctor and I return."

The next half hour was the longest and most fearful in all my life. Milton raved and fought like a demon. In his attempt to escape from snakes, rabbits, squirrels and bears, and all the reptiles and vermin he had ever seen or heard of, he exhausted my strength and gave me the horrors. His face was perfectly hideous with fright; and his shrieks and gutturals, those of a crazy ventriloquist on a rampage. May I and all others be saved from such an experience is my heartfelt prayer.

When Miss Campbell returned, I gave Milton a dose of a sedative first, and later a narcotic. Believing him to be sound asleep, I started off for the doctor.

I was so worn out with the effort of carrying Milton a long distance, and afterwards holding him in bed, that I could not walk fast. Miss Campbell advised me to rest before starting, but I was afraid Milton would awake in my absence and see things again. Indeed it was with a heavy heart that I left her, knowing as I did, that if Milton awoke, he would be hard to manage.

It was near dark when I started, and raining in torrents; and it rained all night. However, I reached the village and found Dr. Jones at home. When I made known my errand, and requested him to return with me, he flatly refused. He said it was not right to take a dog out on such a wet, cold night, and such a distance in the darkness. I agreed with the doctor that it was a bad night. I agreed with him in everything. My object was that of having him see Milton Campbell as soon as possible. I became fluent of speech. I told the good doctor that he was a brave and noble-minded man, serving men, and his Master. What I said he took as a compliment. "His master" need not be named by the use of a capital in writing. I knew the man and knew that flattery was the surest thing, after the dollar, to reach his heart and secure his services. I was impatient at delay. Lest I should do the man, or rather his memory, an injustice, I admit that Dr. Wesley Jones served men at great cost to himself of time, strength, and some skill. But he so often grumbled, snivelled, and always charged so much that I and others sometimes were hard on him, and perhaps forgot to be fair.

All the time I was talking with the doctor he

never once thought that I needed some refreshment. Mrs. Jones came into the office and without stopping to hear much, went out and soon returned with tea and bread and butter.

To travel twelve miles with a man of the temperament and manner of Jones, and that through a thick forest of giant trees with their wet branches drooping low and reflecting the light of a rude lantern, was like travelling through the underworld. It was not quite Dantesque, but it was some kind of a purgatory I am sure. Of course, he lectured me as though I was to blame. All my life I have been quite willing to be converted, and have told preachers and camp-meeting people so; but that night was the worst time or occasion possible for religious exhortation. And Dr. Jones was nearly the last man in the world to succeed.

Half of the distance we rode in a "rig"—combination of buggy and cart. The rest of the distance we walked, after fixing up the horse as thought best. We arrived none too soon, for Milton awoke and began to talk nonsense.

The first thing the doctor gave his patient was a lecture. Not a good lecture, no it was almost as nonsensical as Milton's talk. What was the sense of scolding a man in the condition and

mental state Milton Campbell was in. Pity for his poor sister should have prevented the doctor from preaching and scolding just then. To the good man I was a sinner, and it struck me that much of what he said was intended for my good.

After getting Milton to sleep again, Dr. Jones drew up to the table. He was both a good eater and sleeper. Feeling drowsy, he told me to watch Milton, or "the poor fool," as he called him, and to awake him if there was trouble.

When the doctor began his lecture or sermon, or whatever it was, I asked Miss Campbell to retire to her room. Not until she was sick of the doctor's talk, did she do so.

The day began to break as the doctor settled for repose. There sat I between the night of pain and horror, and the morning of hopefulness. I don't know whether I was saint or sinner most, but I watched and prayed and hoped for the best for the poor sufferer tossing and moaning. Both men slept long, and both seemed refreshed after sleep. The doctor noticed symptoms of other disorders than intoxication, and alarmed us by saying that Campbell was going to pay for his misconduct.

Dr. Jones left about noon. He promised to return in a few days if not told that Milton was

better. He was afraid of complications due to exposure and cold; and left us in a woeful frame of mind. He was not sure that Milton would recover. He had himself to blame. "God always pays the sinner his wages," he said. His last words to me were: "The wages of sin is death." Cut to the quick by the bitterness of tone and the self-righteousness of the speaker I retorted: "But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

CHAPTER XXXI.

If the summer was a beautiful dream, the winter was a troublesome and sorrowful season for us. Milton Campbell surely did pay for his lapse from sobriety. Dr. Jones came often, and always reminded his patient that he was paying up for having gone into camp with bad men.

Miss Campbell wrote to her father, telling him what had happened; and I went to town to post the letter and get my affairs put in shape for the coming winter months.

All talk of the Campbells returning to town had dropped since as the doctor said: "Bad matters could be made worse by moving the sick man."

Mr. Colin Campbell came to the bedside of his son, and throughout the winter nursed him under the instructions of the doctor and his daughter. Most of my time was spent with them, and I did what I could to lighten the load carried by the stricken father. It was the opinion of Dr. Jones that Milton would live and suffer for months, but that his health was gone. If he could be kept quiet and given good attention until spring that he should be taken home and kept there, or sent to a warmer climate.

Worn with anxiety and watching, the father soon became little better than an invalid. He endured with rare fortitude and smiled at our fears for his health. A little after Christmas we were compelled to send him home, and it was only by a miracle that he lived to see the next spring.

At such a time and under such circumstances it was not becoming of me to collapse, and that without giving even myself a warning.

One day as I was using the axe, I had the misfortune to cut my foot badly. The tool was sharp and cut deeply. My first thought was to avoid giving either Miss Campbell or her brother pain or shock by the sight of my bleeding foot. Whether to go into the back kitchen or to attempt to reach my own house, I did not know. Making up my mind to go home, I started, but walking seemed to increase the flow of blood to such an extent that the snow became red wherever I put down my right foot. To go home without being sure of coming back, and to leave such glaring footprints to announce my state of health so uncertainly I concluded would be folly. As I hobbled to the house I met Miss Campbell coming out of the doorway. My changed countenance betrayed me instantly.

"Mr. Meredith, what is the matter with you?" she asked.

"Nothing much, Miss Campbell, but I think I had better take my boot off and see."

Then her eye caught the crimson marks upon the snow beside the wood-pile, and she uttered a cry that told me that she knew only too well what had happened.

The boot being removed, we soon discovered that the injury was of a serious nature. The blood flowed so freely that we saw that it was only a question of a short time before my life would be in danger. Milton was too weak to rise, and I dreaded to excite him by showing him my foot. Knowing that something must be done, and that quickly, I advised Miss Campbell to describe the cut and its place upon the foot, to Milton, and to ask him for advice. She was brave and cool, and as she talked to her brother I could hear that she was cautious; but learning of the state, or rather of the length of the cut, and that the toes were relaxed, he became agitated, and I could hear him say: "God help us, Julia! John has done a bad thing."

Miss Campbell returned to the kitchen, and tearing up a linen sheet, bound up my foot carefully, heeding the instructions her brother

had given. What we wanted to prevent first of all was the flow of blood. This we only succeeded to my satisfaction, but not to Milton's. A second attempt was made after receiving fresh instructions. The news we carried to Milton did not assure him, and he became so sick and excited that I determined that whatever the cost to myself, he should believe that the blood had ceased to flow from the foot.

Well, here was a fine state of things as they appeared to me. A woman between two men, the one half crazy and the other bleeding to death, and she twelve miles, and that in the depth of Winter, from the nearest doctor.

I was beginning to feel very faint, but I managed to give by his sister's hand a dose of narcotic to poor, excited Milton.

When Miss Campbell returned to me, she saw something of my thought in my face. Clasping her hands, and looking up as she turned away, told me that she knew the terrible meaning of my thoughts. Never shall I forget the pleading of her voice, as in a muttered prayer she said:

"Oh, God, thou seest and thou knowest. Save his life and make me strong for the journey."

Coming to my side, she placed her hand on my forehead, saying: "John, I am going to the

village for the doctor. Milton is sleeping, and I will be back before he awakes."

"Julia," I said, "you can never reach the village. You will perish before you are half way. You must not attempt it. My foot will stop bleeding before long, and I can wait for further medical attention until Dr. Jones comes to see Milton."

"No, John Meredith, you must not hide the truth from me. You will die unless the doctor can save you. I must go. You are weak already from the loss of blood. Even if your foot should stop bleeding you will be in great danger. One of our neighbors injured his foot with an axe, and because no doctor could be found he died of lockjaw. I must not let you suffer for us without some risk to myself. I am well and strong, and God will help me. Now, will you please lie down, and I will make you as comfortable as I can before I go, for go I must, and that at once."

After changing the bandages and making me lie down on my back with my injured foot raised high over the back of a chair, Miss Campbell quickly prepared herself for her long journey.

Weakness from loss of blood and the horror

of the thought of a woman going so far amidst so many dangers, maddened me. How I protested. Whilst protesting I lost all sense of feeling. In the state of what I think is usually considered the state of unconsciousness, I became most conscious of some things. So real were things I saw and heard that now after many years I seem to see and hear as I write. Then, and now, I see a woman bend over the prostrate body of a man. The man groaned as though in pain, and the woman kissed him. Who was the man? And who was the woman? Sometimes I thought myself the man, and Miss Campbell to be the woman; I was not sure though. The woman opened the door to go out; turning back she knelt by the prostrate form of the man again. This is what she said (and I could hear every word quite distinctly):

"O, John, your lips may be cold when I return. You will never know in this world how much I loved you. Will you know in heaven, I wonder?" I did not know who the man was, but when the woman kissed him I felt warm lips against my own pressed so tenderly that a sweet thrill passed through me, and I became very calm. The woman passed out into the bush. How bravely did she face the storm.

Every difficulty and danger seemed to make her more resolute, and to increase her strength. Then I lost sight of the woman, and I thought someone called me. Looking around, I saw a man lying on a bed. The man was either frantic or in great pain. His eyes flashed, he uttered cries and clutched the bed-clothes with his long lean fingers. I spoke to the man and he cursed me. Then I tried to hold him, and he threw me against the wall, so strong was he. As I lay upon the floor, the fearful looking man cursed me yet, and raised his hand to strike. Then I saw the woman; she was kneeling in the snow and looking upward. And, oh, a light shone in the distance and it came nearer. Nearer came the light, and there emerged a beautiful strong-looking one. His look and touch calmed the man threatening to strike me. At his gentle bidding the frantic one returned to his bed. The strong and beautiful stood by the bedside speaking tenderly. Turning, he saw me and lifted me to a couch. Between the couch and the bed he walked softly backward and forward, for what appeared a long time to me who watched him with wonder.

CHAPTER XXXII.

But few people have given up the world and lived to have the world given back again. I am one of the few. When returning consciousness made me aware that Miss Campbell had started through the storm for Beecher's Point, I gave up my life. I said:

"She will perish, so let me die."

From that moment I passed into another world. Departed spirits like myself, and celestials, became my guides and companions. Were I to write a truthful description of what I saw and felt, few would believe me; yet I can truthfully say that the other world, if another world it was, was as real as this. Frequently I stood with, and amidst a great throng, praising the Highest. More than once I was shown the entrance to the abode of the lost. Now I know, and understand to a great extent, the value of sanity respecting religious things. If the preachers I had listened to had reasoned more and imagined less, I might have been spared some horrors. The other world which I saw, was the exact fulfilment and realization of all

I had been taught. Nothing more, nothing less. If I were permitted to make but one request of my fellows, knowing that they would grant it, it would be this: "That the sane use of the imagination should be required of all religious teachers."

Several days, so I was told, elapsed before I gave clear evidence of a return to thought and feeling. Dr. Jones arrived bravely on time, so they told me.

"Too late," he said.

After looking at the injured foot, he sat down, saying:

"Poor Meredith! Going as true as I live." Looking me over, he reversed his verdict so far as to say there might be one chance in a hundred if the system would react and overcome the loss of blood caused by hemorrhage. After three days and three nights' work and watchfulness he returned to the village for rest, and that he might obtain the advice and assistance of other medical men, leaving me in charge of Miss Campbell and Peter Snyder. A week later one of Miss Campbell's brothers and Professor Schmidt arrived, and so I was well watched and looked after.

It took months to bring Milton and myself

back to our usual health. I am a little lame yet, and Milton, well, he never was strong after that hunting experience of his.

And what about the woman who saved us? There she is, sitting in the rocking-chair, quite healthy and happy, exacting only in one thing, and that, that nothing be said or written about her or the black winter in the bush twenty-five years ago.

How glad we were to see spring return. Instead of our going to town, some of the town people came to us. Both Mr. and Mrs. Colin Campbell came out, having left the home farm to the younger sons.

As soon as Milton and myself could do a little work we began to enlarge his father's house. Exercise in the fresh air did much for me. I was surrounded, too, by the beauties of nature, and my wants were ministered to by those whom I loved most in the world. Our circle was small, our lives were simple, yet we lived very happily; and I asked no favors of heaven other than I daily recieved. And I think I ought to say that I heard no complaints from others.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Right living is the most useful of the arts. I flatter myself occasionally by taking some credit to myself for having discovered the lost art of living. Professor Schmidt quotes Plato, or some other sage, as saying: "It is the duty of the soul to live." Living as most men live, is common enough, but soul-living is rare. Once the soul becomes awakened, the man begins to live. I have alluded to my experience which I sometimes call my conversion. Call it what I may, I am sure that it was the awakening of my soul, or the quickening of my spiritual nature. God became manifest and imminent to me from that hour. Then came another epoch or event scarcely less wonderful and potent in my life. Love is the crown of life. I began to love, and I say, I occasionally flatter myself with having found the art of living. What is the art of living? It is the art of loving. God and man are the objects of my deepest and tenderest affections. I differ from most of my friends religiously, but any reflection they may cast upon my faith, or the want of faith, has not

reflected upon my conduct. I am not saying this in a self-righteous spirit, but rather to demonstrate that right living is not impossible, neither is it too difficult for those who may undertake it. Let the man be ruled, mastered by love for God and his fellow, rather than fulfil the requirements of a church or a creed, and he will be as successful in noble living as in anything else.

"God is love." But man must be taught to love. I was taught to love, and that by a method which cost me dearly. Who ever loved without paying dearly? Jesus Christ loved, and it cost him Gethsemane and the cross.

Hatred is a fearful thing. How it freezes and dwarfs a man. Had I not undergone a great change, hatred would have ruined me socially. To be a social delinquent is to be practically worthless. The reason for mortal existence is not individual ascendency, but rather universal welfare. That here and there some should be given power or leadership, is not that the few should thrive at the expense of the many. The ascendency of, let us say, the fittest, is necessary for the welfare of the state, yet it must be admitted that only those who stand related to each other by the discharge of obligation and

duty, justify themselves. I could have lived alone, and I did, but I found that it was much better to live with others.

Now, why did I wish to be alone? Was it peculiarity of temperament, or bodily sickness that required it? No! I hated others. At first I hated only a few; then the weed of noxious growth, grew to such proportions that I hated all. Then, a strange set of circumstances, quite unlooked for, threw me into daily contact with a beautiful and pious woman. Beauty may be accidental, but it is powerful. But it was not the lady's beauty that awakened me. It was her devotion. I loved her before I really knew what her face was like. Piety is the mother of devotion. Impious persons are not devoted as a rule, and the exceptions are few. Her devotion to her weak brother, kindled my affection, and I loved. Love for the woman as a person, and as one of a type, grew daily until it mastered me. Love is a spiritual quality of greatest power over the mind and will. Love became the master passion of my life; and my life in its truest sense and deepest meaning, began and has continued until now. These reflections made at the age of sixty years, are pleasing to me because I believe them to be intelligent. I think

I understand myself, and the reasons for being what I was at thirty-five, and what I am at sixty. Cause and effect after all, but cause and effect modified and directed toward the accomplishment of a useful life. A life symmetrical in its parts, and equal in its proportions. Happiness has long been the portion of one who only expected to be miserable. Only the happy are useful, and only the useful have a right to social existence. Of course a man may live as he likes. He may be useful or useless. The latter is sometimes more fashionable. But let the man beware!

CHAPTER XXXIV.

My convalescence was not rapid. It was pleasing nevertheless. A small boy acquaintance of mine says: "It is nice to be sick, because sick people get waited on and are given nice things to eat." Possibly that was why my convalescence was slow.

Spring weather, and out of doors, will cure all but the class called incurables. Ontario is the only country I have ever lived in during springtime, and it is good enough for me. I have visited other countries, but I never had the slightest idea of going away from home about the time the trees began to bud, the flowers bloom, and the birds come back. Italy is a fine country, and the air balmy, so they tell me. I am glad of it, for the sake of the people. Somehow, I have an idea again that Italy and the older countries have some drawbacks. Judging from the human product, I would like Ontario to give a better account of herself in fifteen hundred years than some countries have done.

"Our girl," as Mr. Campbell called his daughter Julia, was very fond of everything

that lived and moved out of doors. Birds, flowers, trees and skies were her delights. I loved such things, too, and spent a deal of time feeding birds, nursing fledglings, gathering wild flowers, and watching the clouds. Not any too arduous an occupation for a healthy man six foot high and proportionate in girth. How I enjoyed my calling!

After Mr. and Mrs. Campbell came out of town and into the bush, Milton and myself, under his father's directions, began building, or adding two rooms to the log house. Neither of us worked very steadily; I was lame and Milton weak, but we managed to get the job done before the next winter set in. When not working, we sat either in sun or shade, talking, reading, and generally smoking. Miss Campbell thought we smoked too much, so I began to regulate my conduct in that respect. Our days, my days, were a delight, and my nights restful. Settler's life had its drawbacks, and there was much real poverty and some sickness in most of the villages and settlements in those days. But our needs were few, and our pecuniary condition not the worst, so life was enjoyable for us all.

I must say little or nothing of the state of my mind and the condition of my heart during those

days. That I was deeply in love with "our girl" was well known to me. No doubt others guessed as much. Only Professor Schmidt looked grave, when he saw me lifting a pail of water, or bringing in a fledgling or flower for Miss Campbell's pleasure. Yes, if ever a man in this world loved a woman, I loved Julia Campbell. I never called upon the skies or the trees, or anybody, to witness the fact. Not I. Raving about the matter wasn't my way, nor according to my thinking. Neither did I ask for any expression of feeling in return. As for asking the lady to marry me, well, I never dared to think of such a thing. Once I asked a Miss Hayes to become my wife. I didn't go on my knees in the front parlor, neither did she faint when I proposed. She said, yes! I suppose I kissed her, but it made me only a shade happier than I was the day before. Then, it might be asked, "Why did you make such a fuss when she married another, if her promise to marry you, gave you no great pleasure? You never loved the woman, and she treated you as you deserved." Yes, I loved her, but my love was of the common kind. What floored me was the shock and the humiliation. I was proud of myself and of my place. I thought I was doing her

a favor, and honoring the house of Hayes, by my proposal. When the butcher's daughter made her excuse and expressed her regrets, I was not so much disgusted as humiliated. When Dan Hamilton married her, and James Brodie went as best man to their wedding, many laughed. The laugh killed me.

I say, if ever a man in this world loved a woman, I loved Julia Campbell. I was so contented in the possession of love, as against hate that I never thought of daring another refusal. I saw the lady every day, conversed with her, and was privileged to be of some small use. Surely that was better than to risk and lose all by asking for impossibilities. I called not upon the stars to witness my love and devotion, but with uncovered head, I had sworn to love Julia Campbell for this world and all the worlds to come; and asked God for permision and help.

Could a man love a woman forever, without possession, may be asked. I cannot answer. I was never put to the test for any great length of time. The testing time came, and how I endured, well or otherwise, let others judge for themselves.

CHAPTER XXXV.

The fall and winter following our convalescence, was marked as a period of great industry and general activity. Several families settled in our neighborhood, and some progress was made in the matter of clearing, bridging and road-making.

In spite of many pleasing circumstances, I began to devise new schemes, either for returning to Forresthill, or going farther back. My alternate plan was to begin clearing where I was, and so become farmer.

Yet I could not make up my mind, chiefly owing to the fact that I was in no permanent mood. My life had fallen into a rut, and whilst I was satisfied with being very happy, I was not always contented with being idle. I lived in my own small house, and attended mostly to my own wants. The event, or events each week, was my going over to Mr. Campbell's. Occasionally Milton and his sister paid me a visit, but not very often.

Acquaintances from Riggsville and Beecher's

Point visited us, and we were asked to return their visits.

When spring and summer came round again we began to assume some importance. A missionary called, and after visiting a few days and holding a meeting, went his way. More than one of Milton's friends passed by as hunters; but with Mr. Campbell on the watch, little opportunity was given for friendliness.

I could see that Miss Campbell was not a "settler," as we used to say. Friends in Toronto had offered her a position, and Milton told me she was likely to go. As at first I was smitten with a half horror, when I heard "the news," as he called it. In a day or so it wore off. Something seemed to tell me that she would not go, quite yet.

About midsummer a friend of the Campbell's, named Maxwell, came to see them. He was a very fine fellow, and very pleasing both in appearance and manners. It did not take me long to see that Miss Campbell and Mr. Maxwell were good friends. What caused it more particularly I do not remember, but I became very dispirited. After excusing myself, I started to go home. Miss Campbell saw me leave, and stepping outside, asked when I would return,

saying that Mr. Maxwell would remain for a few days, and that she would like my help to entertain him. As she stood talking to me, and to insure her request being kindly taken, she touched my hand with the tips of her fingers. A thrill of sweetest feeling passed through me, such as I had never but once experienced before, and that was when I supposed that she kissed me as I lay unconscious. With a most cheerful manner I promised to return the next day.

My reason for going home was that I was much more displeased with myself than others. As I sat in company with the rest, I made what I then regarded as a singular and painful discovery. It was that I was jealous. Now, I always disliked jealous people. Jealousy, I said, is the meanest form that suspicion can take. And I was jealous! So stoutly did I take issue and side against myself, that I ruled John Meredith out of decent company. All the way home I called myself unpleasant names. Had not Miss Campbell asked me to return, I would not have done so.

Yes, I was jealous, and all my fighting amounted to nothing. No victory was gained, as far as I could see or feel. That evening as I sat alone, I argued that I had neither cause

nor right to be jealous. But no victory was gained over the green-eyed monster.

I am wiser now, and have been for a long time. One of the great saints of the church more than a thousand years ago, wrote:

"He that is not jealous, is not in love." Saint Augustine was right. Saints know something sinners never learn.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

I kept my promise made to Miss Campbell. Mr. Maxwell remained about a week, and I saw him, and was in his company nearly every day. The more I saw of him the more I liked him, both for his intelligence and behavior. Milton and Mr. Maxwell, too, were on very good terms, but he clearly showed his preference for Miss Campbell's company.

A few days after Mr. Maxwell's going, Milton and I were sitting in the shade, when he said:

"How did you like Maxwell, John?"

"Quite well, Milton. I suppose you have known him for a long time."

"No, only about a year before we left town. He came from one of the Eastern Townships, and was a stranger to us until Julia and Jennie brought him to the house."

"What is his business?" I asked.

"Storekeeper, and doing well. No doubt he will be back some of these fine days for Julia."

With some little effort, and a little stammering, I intimated that such a thing might be expected, and ought not to be any great surprise

to us. Milton thought that everything was all right, and that some preacher would be called on quite unexpectedly.

How I got to my house an hour later I do not know; for my heart thumped and my head was in a whirl. In vain did I strive to still the tumult raging in my breast. Mockingly, I said:

"Fool that I am, to be bothered like this for the sake of the best woman in the world." And one of my many voices said:

"She is the best woman in the world, John Meredith."

Another voice said:

"You are too late; that's not your fault, but it's your luck."

Unable to sit still, and totally unfit for reflection, I wandered out under the trees. The beauty of the scene upon which I gazed, usually calmed me, now it was devoid of even ordinary interest. The moonlight shone upon the river, and the breeze sighed through the branches all in vain for me. Nature had lost all her charm in one hour. Walking under the trees, I made many resolves. Such resolves as men make who become a prey to despair.

A wretched day, followed by another night of tossing upon my bed, began to tell upon my

countenance. Mr. Campbell came over to see what had become of me, and remarked that I looked like a man taking fever.

Yes, I had taken fever. I knew that, and more, but then what did it matter; life anywhere and everywhere was a fraud and a cheat. Taking fever! What a pleasing thought! I was willing to take anything that would blot out reason and thought, or even life itself. Would they, the Campbells care? Would Julia grieve?

Here was a fine spectacle, a man going mad because a woman made her own choice of a husband. This same man had often shouted to the skies above the tree-tops that he would live a hundred years. Ha! ha!

A whole week passed in such a frame of mind. Loss of appetite, sleeplessness, foot-weariness through constant wandering to and fro under the trees, in search of something to break the spell told upon mind and body. A look at my face in the glass half frightened me. So miserable was my appearance, that I decided that it would be sheer folly to see anyone if it could be avoided.

Both Mr. Campbell and Milton came to see me; the one or the other every day. To them I made all manner of excuses which were really

brand new falsehoods. But then, what could I do? I promised to get better in a day or so, if they would not send for Dr. Jones or allow Mrs. Campbell or Julia come to see me.

As Mr. Campbell was leaving he turned and said:

"Really, John, you must mend, or we will all be sick. You have no idea how Ma and Julia are feeling. Have a little mercy on us, man, and cheer up."

His words were magical. They, Julia was sorry? Why, fool that I was, I might have known it. Did I think she was thoughtless and devoid of all feeling and thankfulness? Shame on a man who could belittle his best friends by his mean thoughts of them.

The next day I argued with myself, that Julia Campbell loved me. I was sure she did. She kissed me. It was no vision or dream. The look in her eyes, the touch of her hand, told me so. She would marry Mr. Maxwell. She was bound to do so, because she had become engaged to him before seeing or knowing me. It was not my fault that I came too late, but my fate. It was a Providence that decided such things after all, and I would abide by what was decreed: "There is a divinity that shapes our ends."

Well, being sure that Julia would grow weary of life if I died of fever, I made up my mind not to take the fever, but a dose of quinine instead. I took two doses to make sure, and soon began to eat and sleep again. Then in a moment of calmness I repented of all the rash things said or thought of. Miss Campbell must marry Mr. Maxwell. I would rejoice in her happiness. I would attend the wedding. I would give her a present, and no friend's present should equal mine either for beauty or cost. What was more, I would return to town and business with all the old-time vigor of body and mind. Living in the town I could often take the train and go to Riggsville to see Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell. Their children should be mine by adoption; and having no one dependent upon me, they should profit by my success in life, and mourn my loss as that of a dear friend of their father and mother.

Having become rational and kindly, it was no wonder that I began to grow well and willing to see my friends.

The reception Mrs. Campbell and her daughter gave me, touched me deeply. There was no doubt in my mind that the mother and daughter were the most queenly women in the province.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

For several weeks I became normal in thought and feeling. Work in the open became a positive legacy of wealth. As the winter was not far off, Milton and I worked hard to finish the addition to his father's house. A spell of wet weather, or a change of the moon or something of the kind, threw me back into one of my gloomy moods. It was the last thing of the kind I experienced. Really it was laughable, were it not that it became so serious.

Having given my consent to Julia's marriage, and promised to be the most gentlemanly and constant friend of all the Maxwells for a generation or two, I had nothing left but the privilege of bewailing a fate or Providence so unkind.

Not having the hardihood to fly in the face of Providence, I disposed of the same and acknowledged Fate as a match-making divinity. Fly in the face of Fate, I certainly did with a recklessness born of desperation and folly.

During two Summers, I took a daily morning

plunge in the deep pool at the bend of the river. One morning when in one of my worst moods, some subtle fiend suggested to my mind the sweetness of death by drowning. How sweet and easy, I thought, as I stood upon the big rock ready to take my first plunge. In and down I went. Hell must have won, for I determined not to rise by any effort to the surface. What kindly power but that of Heaven gave me back my reason, and I saw again the light of day. Filled with amazement and horror at my daring and damnable folly, I climbed the bank with great strength and rapidity. Forgetful even of my clothing, I hurried from the pool into the house. There I sank upon my knees, and with heartfelt gratitude, thanked a merciful God for deliverance from so fearful a death. Suicide was always abhorrent to my mind and thought, at that moment more so that ever.

All day long I lay in a state of complete nervous prostration upon my bed. Later in the day someone knocked at the door but being so unwell, I refused to answer. My refusal to answer was the most criminal thing of my whole life. Failing to see me or gain admittance to the house, Peter Snyder and his son recrossed the river at the bend. Young Peter

caught sight of my clothes upon the bank, and called his father's attention to the matter. Thinking it strange that a man's clothes should be lying on the bank, and no man in sight either in the pool or in the bush, suggested strange things. Having identified the clothing, both father and son concluded that my body was at the bottom of the pool. Hurrying away, they told the Campbells, and all four men returned to the river to search and drag for the body of the missing man. Hearing their cries, one to the other, I dressed and went out. Seeing me approach, they ceased their efforts and asked for an explanation. Putting on the best face I could, I tried to explain by saying that I often bathed and then retired to bed, leaving my clothes upon the bank until later. Mr. Campbell protested against such a practice, and I promised to discontinue it in future.

All were badly frightened by the incident of the day. But their fright was nothing to my shame. Neglecting to take home my clothing was a most careless act; more than that, it was a crime and I was a criminal. To excuse and justify my conduct, I had lied to my friends. I was a liar, too. Shame and remorse seized me. How I wished that I had never risen to the sur-

face of the pool. Tasting the bitterness of perdition in the guilt of conscience, I vowed to end my miserable and worthless life as soon as left alone.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

My brazen face and cynical laughter, quieted the fears of both the Campbells and the Snyders. With a daring worthy of a better man and a better cause, I took all four men into the house and refreshed them with biscuits and wine. As twilight fell, we all parted with quite a show of good feeling.

Left alone, I soon renewed by determination to end my life before morning. Would I leave word on paper for the Campbells? No! not a line or a word. Would I write to Mr. Willis or my brother William? Not a line. What would I do with my money in the bank? The devil might have the whole lump sum. He might get the man, why not his money.

Well there was one thing left, and I would do that. I would get drunk and so make my end sure and pleasing. A second thought: no, I would not touch a drop of liquor, I was not a coward. I would die like a brave man without fear and without boast. As a brave man who through one misfortune after another, had lost all love of life, and who by carelessness of con-

duct, had been compelled to deceive those who loved and trusted him, I could die committing my soul to the mercy of God. This I would do, and thus would I die.

At midnight by my little clock upon the shelf I would walk out calmly to the river pool. Everything was settled, and I lay down in a peaceful state of mind. Lying on my back upon the bed I watched the hands of the little clock.

How strange that Goethe's "Faust" should crowd my mind as I waited. "Faust" was glorious. I understood it now. Quoting passage after passage, I spent my last hour of time. Five minutes before the hour I repeated the words of the unfortunate "Margaret":

> "Judgment of God!
> Myself to thee, I give."
> Was it the fiend Mephistopheles that cried:
> "He is condemned?"
> Who was it that answered:
> "He is forgiven?"

What inspiration as a last mercy came to me, who can tell? I knelt to pray by the bedside. Not being able to frame a last petition, I began: "Our Father, which." . . . .

Rising from my knees, I called Romper in. After caressing and shutting him in the house, I went out. Standing upon the threshold for a moment, I looked up at the stars. Without the least emotion I said:

"Good-bye, beautiful old world! You have been kindest to me, skies, trees, rivers and flowers. Farewell my birds, squirrels and fishes! All farewell!"

The beauty of the night charmed me, and I lingered.

"John—Mr. Meredith!"

"Yes, Miss Campbell!"

"Please come with me, John!"

"Where to, Miss Campbell?"

"Come, John, dear!" she said, as she gave me her hand.

Throwing open the door, I cried so joyfully, "Here Romper, come old fellow, come along!"

Led by Miss Campbell, I passed the path to the deep pool. Was it the fiend again that cried: "Fool! Coward! Coward!"

Oh, the fierceness of the spirit!

"Miss Campbell," I said as calmly as I could, "will you excuse me for a few moments. Please go on and I may follow shortly."

"Please do not leave me, John, dear, I am

only a woman and very much afraid." Saying these words she tightened her clasp of my hand and drew me forward. Turning round she said:

"I am going to ask you a question. Will you answer me?"

"Yes, Miss Campbell, if I can. What is it?"

"Do you know that I kissed you once?"

"Did you?"

"Yes, John, dear, and you never returned it. Will you kiss me now?"

"Miss Campbell!" I cried pitiously, "please allow me to return for a moment, will you?"

"Then kiss me first, and promise not to stay long."

"When I return, Miss Campbell."

"John, please kiss me!"

"I dare not, Julia, I am too unworthy, I am a great sinner. My lips are vile."

"No! No, John Meredith, you are not a great sinner. Then, will you please let me kiss you?"

"No, Miss Campbell, seeing that you are soon to marry David Maxwell. You are his, are you not?"

"Oh! John Meredith, who told you such a falsehood?"

"Your brother?"

"Milton?"

"Yes, Milton."

"Now, I understand it all."

"No, John, dear! No, Milton was mistaken. Mr. Maxwell is to marry my sister Jennie. He came a few weeks ago to ask father's consent, and they are to be married next month. Now, John, please kiss me once."

"Some other time. Some day if you will permit me," I said.

"Very well! But, John, will you let me rest my head upon your breast for a moment?"

The head of a beautiful woman rested upon a man's bosom. The stars and the angels looked down. The woman prayed, prayed for the man. The man wept, and prayed for forgiveness, for the sake of the woman's Saviour. Penitential grief choked his utterance. Placing her arms tenderly around the man's neck, the woman gently drew his head down, and kissed his lips.

"Julia, our Julia," said the man.

"Your Julia, John," replied the woman.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

The weeks that followed were without incident or accident of any kind. I had struggled through a very strange and humiliating experience. My hair perceptibly whitened from the effect of the soul conflict through which I had passed.

Whether Milton Campbell told me a falsehood or merely expressed his own opinion, I do not know yet. His words and actions showed that he was quite insensible of all that passed through my mind and heart as a consequence. He must have noticed later, that his sister made no great effort to hide her affection for me, and also that my cool reserve both toward her and the rest of the family had changed for something better.

Since that fearful night, Julia Campbell and myself have been so happy and interested in each other, that we have scarcely thought, and never once alluded to my dark intention. For days she had noticed that something was wrong. When the Snyders, with woful faces, called that evening, she became quite alarmed. As the

evening became spent, she waited hoping to see me or hear something either from Milton or her father. Not being satisfied, and unable to bear the suspense longer, she came to see me, and to know what was the matter. Midnight is the hour of madness. Nocturnal noon is often the hour of daring, too. So she came by stealth.

Delicacy on the part of a woman is required by society, but seasons and circumstances must decide its worth by its timeliness as well as its reserve. When either man or woman loves to the uttermost, it is time to speak. I am far from wishing to remove the usual restraints required as marks of virtuous conduct, yet I am quite aware and long convinced that cold discretion has often been very fatal. Had Julia Campbell waited for John Meredith to speak, there would long ago have been one man less in this world, and she would have been compelled to mourn the loss of the man she has so long loved and helped.

Before winter came, I was again in the world and as fond of it as any man. The little cottage on a back street of the town of Forresthill became occupied by its owner. The understanding between myself and Julia Campbell being that once I had taken back my old busi-

ness or another, and had shown that my mind and heart were alike sound, that we should be married. Julia did not make such an arrangement. It was mine entirely, and as I thought the only thing that I could consistently do. So I returned to town.

How pleasant it is to reflect, that my return pleased my friends, and that they gave me a warm welcome. James Brodie and others proved how patient and suffering a thing true friendship is. Kate Hayes preferred my friend Dan Hamilton, and by her preference humiliated me. Dan did not think it necessary to ask my permission to marry Kate, and so I cursed them both. "All's well that ends well." And it has ended well for me. And let me say, that I have often patted the little Hamiltons on the head with a deal of pleasure, and Dan knows it.

But I must not overlook the fact of my delinquency. Many and many a time have I thought, yes, and prayed that God would forgive me for being so vindictive. How I wish some kind providence or measure of the Divine Spirit had prevented, or restrained my anger. It is no pleasant thing, even after a lapse of years, to see and converse with people one has injured by cherishing evil thoughts. How

thankful I am to see and know that my curses harmed no one; and that all whom I used to think were my enemies are now my friends.

Once when listening to Professor Rudolph Schmidt and a minister talking upon religious subjects, I remember the latter saying:

"The race is solid. You cannot separate the good of the good from the bad of the bad. Man must rise or fall as a whole. On that principle God is working out the destiny of the human family. Jesus Christ is the head, and his relationship gives virtue and value to the body." The Professor said he liked the idea, but he said he thought that religious teachers gave the principle a wrong application. I have never forgotten the minister's words, "The race is solid. You cannot separate the good of the good from the bad of the bad." On that principle, I can explain much of my strange life and the equally strange lives of others. The wickedness of the wicked must be atoned for by the good of the good. Set the good against the bad, and you get the only satisfactory adjustment; the utmost virtue and value possible in this world—perhaps in any other. Ten years nearly of my life seemed wasted. Looked at from one standpoint, it was folly. Viewed from another, it was

the wisest and best thing I ever did. For more than twenty years I have striven as husband, father, friend and citizen, to do my duty. It would be wrong to say that I have failed. That I hope to succeed in the future, by the discharge of duty and the acceptance of privilege, I avow. How near I came to defeat and death, I have told in these pages.

In July, after my return, I was sitting in my house when the day's work was done, when someone knocked at the door. Opening the door, I saw a face I was glad to see.

"Julia, dear!" I cried.

"John, forgive me," she said.

"Forgive you? What for?"

"For coming so suddenly."

"Julia, dear," I said, "if you had not come, I would have gone out to your father's house. I am so lonesome. Come in!"

As we stood looking into each other's tearful eyes, Julia said:

"And are you lonesome, John, dear?"

"Yes, I am," I replied, "and Julia if you think me worth having and will take all the risk, marry me."

"You are worth all the world, John Meredith, and I will take the risk. There is no risk. You

are as well as I am, and I am well and quite happy."

And sweet was the kiss.

A few minutes later, Julia said:

"John, dear, let us go and see our old friend."

"Who?"

"Professor Schmidt."

"Where is he?"

"At my consin's."

"At Mr. Day's?"

"Yes."

We were married in "the bush." Under the trees on the edge of the clearing, the tables were spread. There we sat down together a happy company. The good old Professor came, and his wife came, too. No man was happier than Professor Rudolph Schmidt, not even myself, and I was happy. Milton said he was jealous, but for Julia's sake he would be good; and he was.

Not being superstitious, I walked down to the deep river pool with a firm step and a light heart, on the morning of my wedding-day. Every season since then I have visited the beautiful spot. I secured the land by title, and it is mine yet, and will be as long as I own anything material. I have taken many a plunge in the

sweet and cool water of the pool. To say that I have forgotten the past, would be to utter a falsehood. I have never forgotten. I can never forget.

THE END.

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